

MEMOIRS

Illustrating the

MANNERS

OF THE

PRESENT AGE.

Wherein are Contained

The remarkable INCIDENTS in the Life
of a YOUNG NOBLEMAN.

PINEAU-DUCLOS

By Monsieur *DU CLOS*,
Historiographer to the *French* King, and Member
of the Royal Academy at *Paris*.

Translated from the *French* by a Gentleman.

In TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

Printed for J. WHISTON and B. WHITE, in
Fleet-Street; R. DODSLEY, in *Pall-mall*;
J. and J. RIVINGTON, in *St. Paul's Church-*
Yard, and G. WOODFALL, at *Charing-Cross*.

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THE
TRANSLATOR'S
P R E F A C E.

A Work of this Sort should necessarily be founded on Truth, flowing naturally from the Principles of Manners, which are as sure, invariable, and far more precious than those of Geometry. Having nothing material in them, they depend entirely on the Understanding without the Help of the Senses; and the Rule and Compass by which they are measured, are found in every judicious and cultivated Mind.

To clear up therefore these Principles, and distinguish them in the different Forms in which they appear, requires all the Strength of an elevated Genius, all the Fire of a rich,
A 2 shining,

shining, and fruitful Imagination, and all the Art, Justness, Precision, and Accuracy of a refined Taste.

Nor are even these rare Endowments enough: An Author of this Kind must besides express his Thoughts in a noble, elegant, and unaffected Manner; and if it be sometimes allowed him to shade them with a Veil of Obscurity, it is because they should appear delivered in the Style of an Oracle.

When they thus bear the Stamp of Truth, and wear that commanding imperious Air in which Reason supported by Eloquence appears, they force our Assent, carry Conviction with them, and fully satisfy the Mind and Heart.

But this must be the Fruit of long Experience and Study. Too much Regularity often weakens our Ideas, which rise from the Imagination in their natural Colours, and want only to be ranged in right Order, and placed in a proper Light.

This noble Assortment of Thought, this happy Assemblage of Ideas is however more difficult than it appears to be at first Sight. It supposes a penetrating Mind, accustomed to Abstractions and free from Prepossession; a
Heart

Heart full of Sincerity, Candour, and Probity; an ardent Zeal for Truth; a surprizing Flexibility of Wit; an uncommon Delicacy of Sentiment; and a consummate Knowledge of the World.

Experience has proved that no Kind of Writing has been so useful to the World, as that which condemns Vice, roots up hurtful Prejudices, shews the Ridiculousness of fashionable Vices or Follies, attacks Immorality, and encourages Virtue. A Play that is not calculated for correcting the Mind or mending the Heart, an History without an useful Object, or a Novel without a laudable Design, can amuse only weak and superficial Minds. And though these whimsical Productions should contribute in some Measure to form and perfect our Taste, yet they generally corrupt the Heart. Suppose them adorned with the finest Strokes of Fancy, and all the Graces that Eloquence can lavish, still they are, for the most Part, no more than the undigested Product of a lively Imagination, where some frivolous or unnatural Events disguised by the Artifice of Words, take up the Place of Truth, and sometimes even of Probability. Reason is forced to acquiesce in the capricious Pleasure they afford, and grows at length so familiar with them, that solid Beauties in other Authors are neglected. Is it not a

Shame for Reason, Learning, and good Sense, that most of our Libraries are only a general Rendezvous of the greatest Extravagancies, and of the wildest and most ridiculous Fancies the Mind of Man is capable of inventing?

Such Writers on the contrary, as deserve the Attention of the Public, have the Good of Society in View; their Labours proceed by Argument to the Demonstration of Truth. The World is the Book that furnishes them with Materials; their Compilations are taken from the Weakness of Humanity; their Authorities from the Incidents of Life, and their Examples from the Virtues or Vices of Mankind.

Nor do they attempt to fathom the boundless Ocean of Metaphysics, where all human Knowledge is swallowed up, but confine themselves prudently to such Parts of it as are of a fixed and determined Application; such as by discovering the internal Causes from which our Actions and Characters arise, fix the Principles of our Conduct, open our Views, enlarge the Sphere of our Knowledge, strengthen our Judgment, soften and polish our Manners, and enforce the Practice of our most essential Duties.

How

How far the Author of the following Treatise has succeeded in an Undertaking (which from this Exposition of it, appears to be so difficult) has already been determined by the learned Men of his Country, where it has been universally admired. Whether in another Dress it deserves to meet the like Reception, must be left to the Judgment and Decision of the Public.*

It cannot be denied but that he is a perfect Master of that Sort of Wit which he tells us, seizes an Object, twines round it, and afterwards winds about to another; that penetrates into the inmost Recesses of it with Strength, unravels all its Folds, and represents it with Clearness. True Wit is like Mercury, which in all the various Forms it puts on, loses nothing of its intrinsic Virtue.

It must also be allowed, that his Plan and his Manner of treating it, are new, regular, and drawn from Nature; that his Disquisitions are not confined to a speculative and barren Knowledge, but applicable to the different
Cir-

* J'ai cru qu'à cette seconde édition le public ne pouvoit que confirmer le jugement avantageux qu'il a déjà porté sur l'étendue des lumières et le goût de probité qui regnent dans cette ouvrage. *Fontenelle.*

Circumstances of Life; that he gives his Subject that masterly, strong, and natural Colouring, which shews him to be an excellent Moral Painter, and that nothing can be more exact than his Definitions, nothing more refined than his Distinctions.

He leaves to Authors of a middling Capacity, (who see nothing in an Object but what at first strikes their Sight) the slavish Regularity of swelling their Volumes with a perpetual Round of Divisions and Subdivisions; of Articles, Points, and Sections; and rises from this dry, tedious and uniform Method to a general Order, consisting in a natural Succession of Ideas, disposed in such a Manner, that they reflect a Brightness on each other. By this Method his Transitions are easy, happy, and so fitted to the Subject, that their Connexion with it is felt more strongly than it is expressed.

There is perhaps no Language that can express the different Operations of the Mind, or the Affections of the Heart, with so much Strength, Beauty, and Energy, as the English; it paints the Sentiments of Love with Softness, Rapture, and Vivacity; of Friendship with Warmth and Good-Nature; of Hatred with Passion and Resentment; of Sorrow with Bitterness and Anguish; and of Despair
with

*with Trouble, Confusion, and Emphasis. It is therefore surprizing that among the great Geni-
 us's who have adorned our Country, and have justly acquired a general and constant
 Approbation in almost all the Branches of Learning, there are so few who have found
 out or followed the Paths which have led La Bruyere, La Rochefoucaut, and Pascal to
 immortal Honour and Reputation. And still our Taste for this Kind of Writing appears
 plainly from the lively Manner in which we are affected by the sentimental Truths inter-
 spersed in most of our dramattick and poetical Performances. Until some more elaborate Work on
 this Subject appears, it is to be presumed, that in a Country where good Sense and close Reason-
 ing have ever been held in the highest Esteem, the following Observations on the Manners
 of the present Age will be received with Candour.*



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T H E



THE
INTRODUCTION.



THE Desire I have of being useful to those, who are to live in the World, is the Motive that engages me, to collect some Reflections on the most striking and affecting Objects I met with. The Sciences have made a truly considerable Progress, only since we have endeavoured to resolve, destroy or confirm our Systems by Experience, Examination, and confronting of Facts. And the same Method should also be practiced, with Regard to the Science of Manners. We have some good Works on this Subject; but as Manners

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ners are liable to Revolutions, the Observations made at one Time are not exactly applicable to another. The Principles drawn from Nature always exist, but to be thoroughly convinced of their Truth, it is highly necessary to observe the different Forms in which they are disguised, without changing them, which, by their Union and Connexion with these Principles, tend more strongly to confirm them.

It were therefore to be wished, that those who had it in their Power to know Mankind, had communicated their Observations to the Publick, which would be as useful to the Science of Manners, as the Journals of Seamen have been to Navigation. Facts and Observations well followed, lead us necessarily to the Discovery of their Principles; whereas Principles that are purely speculative, are seldom sure, and having more rarely any fixed Application, fall often into the Vague of Systems.

What I propose, in considering Manners, is to discover Man's Principles by his Conduct, and perhaps to conciliate his Contradictions. Man is inconsequent in his Actions, for no other Reason, but his being inconstant in his Principles.

Though

Though this Work seems to be calculated chiefly for the Knowledge of this Age, I hope the Examination of the present Characters of Mankind, will serve to make Men of all Ages known.

I shall divide the different Articles, I propose to treat of, into Chapters, for Order and Perspicuity; and chuse the Subjects that appear to me most important, whose Application is most frequently met with, and most extensive; by their Re-union, I will endeavour to make them concur to the same End, which is, the Knowledge of Manners.

I hope my Notions will prove equally distant from the Servitude and Licentiousness of Writing; and shall employ, like a good Citizen, the Liberty which Truth has Occasion for.

If this Work takes, it will please me exceedingly; if it is judged useful, it will heighten my Content.

C H A P. I.

On Manners in general.

BEFORE we talk of Manners, let us begin by determining the Ideas, which are annexed to this Term; I say the Ideas, for it is one of those Words, which having no *Synonima*, receives various Acceptations.

Manners, when we talk of Persons in private Life, signify nothing else but the Practice of moral Virtues, or the Depravation of Conduct, according as this Term is taken in a good or bad Sense; but when it is relative to a Nation, it means their Ways and Customs, not those, which being indifferent in themselves, depend on the Caprice of an arbitrary Mode; but the Ways which influence or depend upon their Manner of Thinking, Feeling, and Acting. It is in this Light I consider Manners.

It would be wrong to imagine that such Considerations are purely speculative Ideas. The Errors we may embrace, on this Subject, are occasioned by many Authors, who

who writing on Morality, begin by supposing, that Man is but a Compound of Misery and Corruption; and that he can produce no good or valuable Thing. This System is as false as it is dangerous. Men are equally capable of good and bad; they can be corrected, since they can be perverted; else why are they punished, why recompenced, or instructed? But to have a Right to reprove, and be entitled to correct them, it would be necessary first, to love Humanity; thus we become just towards them without Harshness or Rigour, and indulgent without Meanness or Remissness.

Men are, it is said, full of Self-Love, and attached to their Interest. Well, suppose them so. These Dispositions have nothing vicious in themselves; they become good or bad, by the Effects they produce. Thus we can form no Judgment of the Sap of Plants, but by their Fruits. What would become of Society, if it was deprived of its Springs, if our Passions were retrenched? Let Men be taught to love one another, let the Necessity of their Happiness be proved to them by so doing. It can be demonstrated, that their Glory and Interest are found only, in the Practice of their

B 3
Duties.

Duties. They are deceived, but to be made more miserable; on Account of the low Opinion they learn from some Authors to conceive of themselves: In this Sense, they can be criminal, without having Reason to blush for it. To make them better Men, they have need only of Instruction; as Crimes, in the Manner they are given to understand them, are sometimes nothing else but false Judgments.

This is the Science of Morality, a Science which is more important and as sure as those founded on Demonstration. No sooner is there a Society of Men formed, than there are also Morals and sure Principles of Conduct. We are linked together by a mutual Chain, and are equally indebted to each other, let our Duties be never so different. This is as sure in Morality, as it is in Geometry, that all the Rays of a Circle are equal, and meet in one Point.

It is therefore our Duty to examine the Errors of Men; but this Examination should be made on Manners in general; on the different Classes that compose Society; not on the Manners of particular People, whose Pictures should not be drawn
to

to an exact Resemblance, but the Portraiture of Mankind painted in proper Colours. In this consists the principal Difference between Morality and Satyr.

Nations, like private Men, have their distinguishing Characters; with this Difference, that the Manners of a private Man are the Result of his Character, but do not necessarily constitute it; whereas the Manners of a Nation, form precisely a national Character.

The most savage People are the most criminal; and the Infancy of a Nation is not its Age of Innocence. Excess and Disorder form the first Notion of Laws: Their Establishment is owing to Want, often to Crimes, but not to Foresight.

Nor are the most polished People the most virtuous. Severe and simple Manners are only to be met with amongst those, who are governed by Reason and Equity; and who have not as yet prostituted their Minds to Corruption. The best regulated People are more to be prized than the most polite. The Laws of Barbarians form and soften their Manners; and the Manners of a civilized People, strenghten, supply, and perfect

fect the Laws, which by false Politeness are forgot. The most happy State would be, where Virtue was not reckoned a Merit. When Virtue begins to be remarked, then Manners change; when it becomes ridiculous, then is the highest Degree of Corruption.

It would be an Object of great Moment, to examine the different Characters of Nations; and the physical or moral Cause of their Difference: but it would be Rashness to undertake it, without being thoroughly and equally acquainted with the People compared; besides such an Undertaking would lie under the Suspicion of Partiality; and the Study of Men we must live with, is what is truly useful to us.

Without stirring out of our own Country, what a vast and varied Field have we! And without entering into Subdivisions, which would be more real than sensible; what a Difference, what Opposition of Manners, do we not observe, between the Capital and the Provinces? they differ as much, as one Nation from another.

Such as live a hundred Leagues from the Capital, are, at least an Age behind
us,

us, in their Manner of thinking and acting. I do not deny Exceptions; as I speak only in general; nor do I pretend to decide, where the real Superiority lies. I only take Notice of the Difference.

When a Man, who has been a long Time absent from the Metropolis, returns to it, it is observed, he is grown *rusty*; When perhaps he is become more reasonable, but he certainly differs from what he was. It is only at *Paris*, a *Frenchman* should be considered, here he is more so than elsewhere.

My Observations do not regard those, who devoted to private Occupations, or to painful Labour, have, every where, no other Ideas, but such as are relative to their Situation, and independent of the Places they inhabit. There are more of these Victims of Labour at *Paris*, than in any other Part of the World.

I consider those chiefly, whose Idleness and Opulence suggest Variety of Ideas, fantastical Judgments, inconstant Sentiments and Affections, which give a free Spring and Scope to their Character. These Men alone form a People in the Capital.

Seized with alternate Fits of Dissipation, Ambition, or what they call Philosophy; that is to say Humour or Misanthropy; hurried away with Pleasures, or tormented sometimes with Interest or frivolous Fancies, their Ideas are never pursued, are often in Contradiction, and appear to themselves successively of equal Evidence. Their Occupations are different at *Paris* from what they are in the Provinces; even Idleness in both Places, wears a different Aspect: In one, it is a Languor, a Numbness, a material Existence; in the other, it is an Activity without Design, Motion without an Object. They feel more at *Paris* than they think, act more than they project, and project more than they resolve. They esteem only the modish Talents and Arts; and scarce have any Notion of the necessary Arts, which are enjoyed without being known.

The Ties of Blood decide nothing about their Friendship; they only require Duties of Decency; whereas in the Provinces good Offices are exacted; not that they love each other better, but because they seem to have nearer Degrees of Affinity.

There

There reigns at *Paris*, a certain general Indifference, which multiplies their transient Tastes, and unites them in such a Manner, that every one is agreeable in Society, and no one necessary. The extreme Diffipation in which they live, is the Cause, why they do not concern themselves enough for each other, to have any Delicacy or Constancy in their Ties.

Though they meet with Pleasure, yet they seek each other's Company but very little; thus they receive and entertain each other, with more Vivacity than Warmth, and quit without Regret or Attention.

Manners are at *Paris*, what the Spirit of Government is in *London*; in Society they confound and put all the Ranks on a Level, which are distinguished and subordinate in the State. In *London*, all Orders live in Familiarity, because they want each other, and their Interest unites them.

Pleasures produce the same Effect at *Paris*; all those who are pleased with each other, agree; with this Difference, that Equality is a valuable Benefit, when it is founded on the Principles of Government;

and is a great Evil, when it proceeds from Manners; because this never happens, but through their Corruption.

A *Frenchman's* greatest Fault is, that he is always young, and scarce ever a Man; hence he is often amiable, but seldom sure: He hardly ever ripens with Years, and passes directly from Youth to old Age. He gives an early Proof of his Talents in every Kind; which he neglects a long Time, through Dissipation; and he hardly begins to employ them, when their Time is passed. There are but few amongst us, whose Knowledge is founded on Experience.

Shall I venture an Observation, which perhaps is not as well grounded, as it appears to me; but I think, that when we are passed sixty, we are no longer fit for such of our Talents, as require Strength and Vigour in their Execution. We never succeed better in whatever we undertake, than in the middle Age of Life; which is very short, nay we succeed better in Youth, than in old Age. If we had formed our Minds to an early Reflection, (and this Education I believe is possible,) we should be without Contradiction, the first of Nations, because in spite of our Faults,
there

there are none that can be preferred to us. Perhaps we could even value ourselves on the Jealousy of a great many. For Jealousy rises only from Superiority; as for those Nations that fairly prefer themselves to us, it is because their Want of Merit does not entitle them to Jealousy.

On the other hand, most *Frenchmen* believe it is a Merit to be so; with these Sentiments, how little is wanting to them, to become Patriots? I do not speak of those who esteem only Strangers. Some People affect to despise their Country, because they are not willing to own their Superiours, or Rivals, too near them.

Men of Merit, of whatever Country they are, form but one amongst themselves. They are divested of childish national Vanity, which they leave to the Vulgar, to those who having no personal Glory, are forced to pride themselves on that of their Countrymen.

We should not therefore allow ourselves any rash or injurious Parallel: But if it be permitted to remark the Faults of our Country, it is our Duty to raise its Merit; and

and a *Frenchman* has one distinctive Characteristick.

It is the only Nation, whose Manners can be depraved without Corruption of Heart, or Alteration of Courage; that joins heroick Qualities with Pleasure, Luxury, and Effeminacy; whose Virtues have but little Consistency, and whose Vices have no Roots. The Character of *Alcibiades* is often found in *France*. The Corruption of their Manners and Imagination does not lessen the Candour, Openness, and natural Goodness of a *Frenchman*; Self-Love contributes to make him amiable; the more he believes he pleases, the greater Desire he has to love. That frivolous Vanity, which appears in the unfolding of his Talents and Virtues, preserves him at the same Time, from perfidious reflected Crimes. Treachery is a Stranger to him, and only borrowed in his Intrigues. If sometimes, odious Crimes were seen amongst us, they disappeared, sooner, on Account of our national Character, than the Severity of our Laws.

A very learned People, and highly esteemable in a great many Respects, complain, that Corruption is risen to such a Degree, that there are no more Principles
of

of Honour left amongst them; that their Actions are all valued, and bear an exact Proportion with their Interest, insomuch that a *Tariff* of their Honesty could be made.

I am very far from believing the Humour and Declamations of Party; but if there had been such a People, (which I cannot believe) they would be composed of an infinite Number of bad and low-minded Men, to be gained at all Prices; and more Wickedness found amongst them, than in any other Part of the World; whereas the Value of all their Virtues could be calculated.

This is not, happily, our Case. We have but few Men addicted to Crimes by System; Misery is the chief Rock on which our Probity is wrecked. A *Frenchman* is hurried away by Example, and seduced by Want; but he does not betray his Virtue on Purpose. Necessity begets only Faults, but Avarice reduced into System, Crimes.

It is at least a great Advantage, not to suppose that Honesty can become venal; it hinders a great many People from seeking
its

its Price; and it can exist no longer, when it is set up at Auction.

The Abuses and Inconveniencies which are observed amongst us, would not be without a Remedy, if we pleased; without entering into a Detail of those, which belong as much to Authority, as to Philosophy; what real Advantages would not a People receive, whose general Education was fitted to their Genius, to their natural Qualities, to their Virtues, and even to their Faults?



CHAP.

C H A P. II.

On Education.

THERE is a great deal of Instruction found among us, but very little Education. We have learned Men and Artists of all Sorts; every Branch of Learning, Sciences, and Arts is cultivated with Success. But we have not yet attempted to form Men, that is to say, to breed them up respectively for each other, and build, on the Basis of general Education, all particular Instructions; so as to accustom them, to seek their private Advantages on the Plan of publick Good, and make them, in every Profession, begin to be Patriots.

We have all of us, in our Hearts, the Seeds of Virtues and Vices; one should be repressed, and the other unfolded. All the Faculties of the Soul, are reduced to Sentiment and Thought; our Pleasures consist in loving and knowing: we need therefore, only regulate and exercise these Dispositions, to make Men useful and happy, by the Good they are capable of doing, and which they would experience themselves.

selves. Such is the Education, which ought to be general and uniform ; whereas Instruction should be varied, and different according to the State, Inclination and Disposition of those, who are to be instructed.

This is not an Idea of an imaginary Republick ; besides, such Ideas are at least, happy Models, Chimeras that are not quite so, which can be realized, to a certain Degree. A great many Things seem impossible, only because we are accustomed to think them so. A contrary Opinion, and some Courage would often make Things easy, which Prepossession and Cowardice judge impracticable.

Can we look upon what is brought into Execution, to be chimerical ? Have not some antient People, such as the *Agyptians* and *Spartans*, had an Education relative to the State, whose Constitution was in some Measure, formed by it ?

It would be vain, to call Manners, so distant from ours, in Question : We can know Antiquity, but by the Testimony of Historians ; they all confirm and agree in this Article. But as we judge of Men,
only

only by our own Age, we can scarce persuade ourselves, that there have been any formerly, more wise, than at present; tho' we can't forbear repeating it, through a Spirit of Contradiction. I willingly give some Allowance for a philosophical Doubt, by supposing, that Historians have embellished their Subjects; but this is what proves precisely to a Philosopher, that what they writ, is grounded upon Truth. They are far from giving the same Testimony of other Nations, whose Glory, notwithstanding, they would have been glad to raise.

It is therefore certain, that in the Education, which was given at *Sparta*, they applied themselves first to form *Spartans*. Thus in every State, Men should be inspired with the Sentiments of good Citizens. *Frenchmen* should be formed amongst us, and for this Purpose, Care should be taken to make them Men.

I dont know whether I have too good an Opinion of our Age; but it appears to me, that there is a Sort of Fermentation of universal Reason, that works to clear itself up, which perhaps, will be suffered to evaporate; and which could serve to confirm and hasten

hasten the Progress of a regular Education.

Far from proposing these great Principles to ourselves, our Thoughts are employed in some Methods of particular Instructions, the Application of which is as yet very uncertain.

Artisans and Artists whose Existence depends upon their Labour, are perhaps the only People, who receive Instructions suitable to their Destination; but the same are likewise given to those, who are born to some Fortune. There is a certain Collection of Skill and Knowledge, prescribed by Use, which they learn imperfectly; and with which they are deemed instructed, in all they want to know, whatever the Professions may be, to which they are destined.

This is what is called Education, and what so little deserves the Name of it. Most Men who think, are so convinced that there is no good one, that those who have their Children's Interest at Heart, form new Plans to bring them up in. It is true, they are often deceived in the Means of reforming they devise; and their Care

is

is ordinarily confined, in abridging and smoothing the Way to Sciences; but their Conduct proves, at least, that they have a confused Notion of the Faults of usual Education, without discerning precisely in what they consist.

Hence proceed the fantastical Choice that is made, and the Errors which even those fall into, who seek Truth with more Sincerity than Discernment.

Some do not distinguish either the Term, where general Education should end, or the Nature of the particular Education, which should follow the first; and often adopt that, which suits the least with the Man who is to be formed. This deserves notwithstanding, the greatest Attention. In general Education, Men should be considered with relation to Humanity and to their Country, these are the Objects of Morality. In particular Education, Man's State and Condition, his natural Dispositions and personal Talents should be regarded. Such is, or ought to be, the Object of Instruction, but the Conduct that is followed, appears to me to be quite different.

When

When a Work destined for the Education of a Prince, meets with Applause; the least Gentleman thinks it is proper for the Education of his Son. Here a foolish Vanity decides more than Judgment. What Relation or Conformity is there in Reality, between these two Men, one of whom is to command, and the other to obey, without having even the Choice or Manner of his Obedience in his Power ?

Others are driven by Prejudice, to another Extreme, more dangerous than the most imperfect Education. They look upon all the Principles they have received, as so many Errors, and universally proscribe them. Yet Prejudices themselves, ought to be discussed and treated with Circumspection.

Prejudice is nothing else but a Judgment formed or admitted without being examined; and can be true or false.

Prejudices hurtful to Society, can be nothing else but Errors; and cannot be too much opposed. Nor should we entertain Errors, which of themselves are indifferent, if there be any such : In these Cases,
Prudence

Prudence is required, which is often necessary; even when we wage War against Vice, we ought not to root up the Tares too rashly. For what concerns Prejudices tending to the Good of Society, which are Seeds of Virtue, we can be assured, they are Truths that must be respected and followed. It is useless to take Pains to demonstrate Truths, which are received; it is enough to recommend the Practice of them. In attempting to enlighten Men too much, they are only inspired with dangerous Presumption. Why should any one undertake to make them practice by Argument, what they followed by Sentiment, and an honest laudable Prejudice; which are as sure Guides as Argument?

A great Clamour has been raised for some Time against Prejudices; perhaps but too many of them were destroyed; Prejudice is the Law of most People. A Discussion on this Topick, requires sure Principles and uncommon Light. Most Men being incapable of such an Examination, ought to consult their interior Sentiment: Which the most Learned can often prefer to the Light of their Reason, in what regards Morality; and take their Taste or Repugnance for the surest Rule of Conduct.

duct. It is hard to be deceived by this Method: When one has the Heart-felt Pleasure of behaving well towards others, it seldom happens, that he is dissatisfied. There are but few Reproaches to be made to those who do not reprove themselves; and it is useless to upbraid such People, as have left off upbraiding themselves.

I cannot forbear, on this Subject, blaming those Writers, who under Pretext of attacking Superstition, which would be a laudable and useful Motive, if they kept within the Bounds of patriot Philosophers, endeavour to undermine the Foundations of Morality, and loosen the Bonds of Society: They are by so much the more mistaken, as it would be of dangerous Consequence to themselves to make Profelytes. The fatal Effects these Writings produce, are to make their Readers bad Citizens, and scandalous Transgressors in their Youth, and unhappy Men in a more advanced Age: For there are but few, who have the sad Advantage of being perverted enough, to be easy in their Mind.

The Eagerness, with which this Sort of Books is read should not, methinks, flatter the Authors, who otherwise may have

a great deal of Merit. They cannot but know, that the most miserable Writers in this Kind, share almost equally this Honour with them. Satyr, Licentiousness and Impiety alone, have never proved Wit. The most despicable Works on this Head, may be read once; were it not for their Extravagance, they never would have been mentioned; like those unhappy Men, who are condemned to Darkness, and whose Names the Publick is made acquainted with, only on Account of their Crimes or Punishment.

To return to Prejudices; there is a sure Method enough of judging of them, without a formal Discussion; which would prove easy, and often applicable to particular Circumstances, especially in Morality. It consists in observing the Things, that raise our Vanity, which probably arise from false Ideas. The more virtuous a Man is, the farther he is removed from Vanity, and the more persuaded he knows nothing but his Duty; for Virtue does not beget Pride.

The most tenacious Prejudices are always those, whose Foundation is the least solid. We can be undeceived in our reason-
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ed Errors, by reasoning farther upon them. A stronger and more forcible Reason gets the better of the first; but how can we attack what has neither Principle nor Consequence? and such are all false Prejudices. They are begot and grow insensibly with fortuitous Circumstances, and are at length generally established amongst Men before they perceive their Progress. It is not surprising, that false Opinions have risen, without the Knowledge even of those, who are the most attached to them; but they fall of themselves as they gained Ground. It is not Reason that proscribes them, they succeed each other, and perish with the Revolution of Time. They make Room one for the other, because our Mind can receive but a limited Number of Errors.

Some Opinions which are consecrated and generally received amongst us, will appear absurd to our Grand-Children; none but the Philosophers of their Time, will be able to conceive that these Opinions could have had Abettors. Men do not require Proofs, in order to adopt an Opinion; their Mind wants only to be made familiar with it, as our Eyes with Modes.

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There are some Prejudices, which are known, or at least acknowledged to be false, by those who make them serve their Turn. For Example, that of Birth is allowed to be such, even by those who tire us the most with their Pedigree. They do not fail, unless they are stupidly proud, to repeat, they know Nobility of Blood is a meer Chimera. Yet there is no Prejudice harder to break ones self of: There are but few Men wise enough to esteem Nobility as an Advantage, and not as a Merit; and who content themselves to enjoy it without Vanity. Let new Men, whose Dirt was but lately rubbed off, be drunk with Titles that do not fit them; they are in some Measure excusable: But it is surprising to find the same Madness in those, who can rely on the Dignity and Publickness of their Name. If they pretend, by this Means, to force Respect, they exaggerate their Pretensions, and carry them beyond their Right. Respect of Obligation is only due to those, whom we are subordinate to by Duty, to our true Superiors, whom we should always distinguish from others, whose Rank only is superior to ours. Respect paid only to Birth, is a Duty of meer Decorum; it is an Homage to the

Memory of Ancestors, who have made their Name illustrious; an Homage, which with Respect to their Descendants, is in some Sort, like the Worship of Images, to which no peculiar Virtue is attributed, as they are the Productions of common Art; and have only a relative Respect paid them.

If we had a Mind to examine the most Part of received Opinions, what a Number of false Prejudices would not we find, even in considering those only, whose Examination is relative to Education? We follow by Habit, and with Confidence, the Ideas established by Chance.

If Education was guided by Reason, Men would acquire a great many Truths with more Facility than they receive a small Number of Errors. Truths have one with another, a Relation, a Connection, and Affinity, Points of Contact, which help Knowledge and Memory; whereas Errors stand generally by themselves, and are more efficacious than consequent; greater Efforts are required to be undeceived, than to be preserved from them.

Ordinary

Ordinary Education is far from being systematical, when some imperfect Notions of Things, which are but of very little Use, are acquired; the chief Instruction that is afterwards recommended, is the Means of making a Fortune. Politeness is the Morality we are taught, which is more a necessary Means of acquiring a Fortune, than a Lesson of Humanity.

What does this Politeness consist in? which is so much recommended, on which so much was writ, so many Precepts given, and so few fixed Ideas? Subjects, which were so often treated, are looked upon to be exhausted; and those, whose Importance is cried up, to be clear and evident. I do not flatter myself with the Thoughts of treating this Matter better than has been already done; but I will tell my Mind in a few Words. There are some inexhaustible Subjects; besides it is useful, that those whose Knowledge concerns us nearly, should appear in different Lights, and be seen by different Eyes. Weak Eyes, whose Weakness even makes them more attentive, perceive sometimes what has escaped a more extended and rapid Sight.

Politeness is the Expression or Imitation of social Virtues; it is the Expression, if it be true, and the Imitation, if it be false: Social Virtues make us useful or agreeable to those we live with. A Man who enjoys them all, is certainly polite in the highest Degree.

But how does it happen, that a Man of an elevated Genius, of a generous Heart, and exact Justice, is wanting in Politeness, whilst it is found in another of shallow Understanding, in one, who has always his own Interest at Heart, or a Man of suspected Probity? It is because the first wants some social Qualities, such as Prudence, Discretion, Reserve, or Indulgence for the Faults and Weakness of Men. One of the first social Virtues, is to tolerate in others, what we should forbid ourselves. Whereas the second, without having any Virtue, has the Art to imitate them all. He knows how to shew Respect to his Superiors, Goodness to his Inferiors, Esteem to his Equals, and persuades them all, that he thinks favourably of them, without having one of the Sentiments he imitates.

Nor

Nor are they now so much as required ; the Art of feigning is what constitutes the Politeness of our Days. This Art is often ridiculous and vile enough to be given for what it is, that is to say, for Falshood.

Men know, that the Politeness they shew each other is but an Imitation of Esteem. They agree in general, that the obliging Things they say, are not the Language of Truth or of the Heart; and in particular Occasions, they themselves are deceived and gulled in their Turn. Self-Love makes every one believe foolishly, that what is done through Decorum, is a Justice paid them.

Though we were convinced that Protestations of Esteem are false, yet we prefer them to Sincerity; because this Falshood has an Air of Respect in some Occasions, where Candour and Truth would be offensive. A Man knows that others think ill of him, and this mortifies him; to acknowledge it to himself, would insult him, deprive him of the Resource he seeks in blinding himself, and prove to him, how little he is esteemed. Such as are most united, and have most Reason to

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esteem

esteem each other, would become mortal Enemies, if they shewed plainly, and without Disguise, what they think of each other. There is a certain Veil of Obscurity, which preserves Friendship, and which we are all afraid to lift up.

I am far from from advising Men to shew harshly, what they think, as they are often deceived in their Opinions, which they are apt to retract, without being able afterwards to form sounder Judgments. This Harshness is allowed only to Friendship, though sure soever Men may be of their Judgment, and should moreover be authorised by Necessity, and Hopes of succeeding. Cruel Operations were found out, but to save our Lives, and Palliatives to alleviate our Pains.

Let those whose Employment it is to correct Manners, pronounce harsh Truths; their Voice is only addressed to the Publick; but particular People receive no Correction, but by proving it to be their Interest, and by sparing their Self-Love.

But what Kind of Dissimulation is permitted, or rather, where lies the Medium, which separates vile Falshood from offensive

fenfitive Sincerity ? in mutual Regard, that forms the Bonds of Society, and grows from the Conviction of our own Imperfections, and the Need we have of Indulgence. Men should neither be deceived, or offended.

It appears, that in the Education of the People of the World, they are supposed incapable of Virtue; and that they would have reason to blush, had they shewed themselves to be what they really are; as if a Mask was a Remedy for Deformity.

The Politeness which is in Use, is but a silly Jargon, full of exaggerated Expressions, as void of Sense as of Sentiment.

Politeness, however, shews, it is said, a Man of Birth; the greatest Men are the most polite. I own that this Politeness is the first Mark of Elevation, and a Bulwark against Familiarity. There is a great Difference between Politeness and Sweetness of Temper; and a greater between Sweetness of Temper and Goodness. Great Men who keep us at a Distance with Politeness without Goodness, should also

be paid in their Turn, with Respect without Attachment.

It is added, that Politeness proves an Education well taken Care of, and our having lived in chosen Company; it requires so nice a Touch, and so delicate a Sentiment for whatever is suitable or agreeable, that such as have not been initiated in it, in their Youth, make but vain Efforts to acquire it afterwards; and can never go through it gracefully and genteely. First, the Difficulty of a Thing, is not a Proof of its Excellence. Secondly, it is to be wished, that Men who purposely renounce their Character, should gather no other Fruit but that of becoming ridiculous; this perhaps would bring them back to Truth and plain Dealing.

Besides, this exquisite Politeness is not so rare, as those who have no other Merit would persuade us. It produces now a Days so little Effect, as its Falseness is so well known, that it is sometimes disagreeable, even to those whom it is addressed to; insomuch, that some People think it advisable to act in a rude and clownish Manner, the better to imitate Openness and Sincerity, and cover their Designs. Thus they
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are rude without being sincere, and false without being polite.

This Practice is common enough to be known better than it is as yet. It should be forbid every Man to shew any Roughness, who cannot excuse this Blemish in his Character by an irreproachable Conduct.

Not but that we can join a great deal of Address with a great deal of Uprightness; but it is only a Continuance of open Proceedings that forms the Distinction between Address and Artifice.

We should not, for this Reason, regret the rustick Times, when Men swayed only by their Interest, always pursued it, by a savage Instinct, to the Prejudice of others. Rudeness and Ill-breeding do not exclude either Fraud or Artifice, which are observed in the most fierce and untractable Animals.

It is by polishing themselves, Men have learned to reconcile their private with the common Interest; and by this Conformity have experienced, that every Man draws more from Society than he could put into it.

Men owe therefore, some Regard to each other; whereas they are indebted, one to another, for Gratitude. They owe each other a reciprocal Politeness, worthy of them, made for rational Beings, and varied with the different Sentiments, which inspire it.

Thus the Politeness of great Men ought to be Humanity; that of Inferiors, Gratitude, if great Men deserve it; that of Equals Esteem and mutual good Offices. Far from excusing Rusticity, it were to be wished, that the Politeness which flows from Sweetness of Manners, was always united with that, which rises from the Uprightness and Integrity of the Heart.

The most unhappy Effect which usual Politeness produces, is to teach us the Art of making no Account of the Virtues we imitate. Let us, in our Education, be inspired with Humanity, Bounty and Benevolence, and we shall, by this Means, learn Politeness, or have no farther Need of it.

If we want that Sort of Politeness which is attended with Graces, we shall have that
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which shews and proves an honest Man, and a good Subject; and shall have no Occasion to have Recourse to Falshood.

Thus instead of Artifice, in order to please, Goodness will suffice; and instead of Falshood, in order to flatter the Weakness of others, it will be enough to be indulgent.

We can avoid puffing those up with Pride, or corrupting them, with whom we act in this Manner : They will shew us their Gratitude for it, and become better Men.

This is the Foundation on which general Education should be built, in order to prepare particular Instructions.

C H A P.

C H A P. III.

On Probity, Virtue and Honour.

WE hear nothing talked of so much as Probity, Virtue, and Honour; but have all those, who make use of these Expressions, uniform Ideas of them? Let us endeavour to distinguish them. It would doubtless be better to inspire Sentiments, in treating a Subject which is not confined to Speculation; but it is notwithstanding useful to clear up and fix the Principles of our Duties. There are a great many Occasions wherein Practice depends on our own Light.

Probity is the Observation of the Laws. But besides the Laws which repress Attempts against politick Society, there are Sentiments, and Proceedings in Use, which secure and soften civil Society, and the particular Commerce and Intercourse of Men; the Observation of which, is so much the more Indispensable, as it is free and voluntary; whereas the Laws have provided for their own Execution. Who-
ever

ever has no more Probity than is required by them, is a dishonest Man.

The Laws countenance, and fall in with our Weakness and Passions, and repress only what openly attacks Society; if they had entered into a Detail of all that can affect it indirectly, they could not be universally understood, nor consequently followed; there must have been too many Transgressors, whom it would have been unjust, and often difficult, to chastise, considering the Proportion that ought always to be between Faults and Punishment.

In Proportion as Men were polished and enlightened, those, whose Minds were the most inclined to Honesty, have supplied the general Laws, in establishing, by a tacit Agreement, certain Customs, to which Use has given the Force of Law amongst well-bred Men; though there is not, it is true, any Punishment pronounced against the Infringers of them, it is not for this Reason, less real. Contempt and Shame are the Chastisements allotted for them, and the most feeling Punishment to those who are worthy to have a true Sense of them. Publick Opinion exercises Justice in this Occasion, marks out the exact Pro-

Proportions, and makes the most refined Distinctions.

Men are judged according to their State, Education, Situation, or Knowledge. It seems that different Degrees of Probity have been agreed on, and that each Man is only obliged to have the Degree, which is answerable to his Condition; and can have no other, but what is proportionable to his Judgment and Understanding. Some Men, who being exposed to the Eyes of the Publick, can serve as Examples, are treated with more Severity than others, whose Fate it is to be in Obscurity. The less is required of a Man, from whom a great deal should be expected, the greater Injury is done him. As to what regards the Customs I mentioned, one is very near Contempt, that pleads a Right to Indulgence.

The Opinion of the Publick, being itself the Punishment of the Actions it judges, cannot but use Severity on the Things it condemns. There are some Actions whose Proof consists only in Suspicion, and whose Punishment in their Notoriety.

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It is surprising, that this Opinion, so severe on simple Proceedings, does not extend itself to Crimes, that belong to the Laws; which do not become truly shameful, but by the Punishment that follows them.

There is no Maxim more false in our Manners, than that which says, that *Crimes are infamous, not the Scaffold*. This indeed should be so; yet we reinstate ourselves in our former Reputation, when our Crimes pass unpunished; but let it not be said, we do so, because Punishment denotes them, and gives alone a sufficient Proof of them.

Men are more rash, than circumspect in their Judgments, but are really moved only with material and sensible Facts. This is so true, that a Crime proved by Pardon, disgraces and dishonours less than Punishment. We observe it chiefly, in the Injustice and Oddness of that cruel Prejudice which reflects Disgrace and Ignominy on those, whom the Tie of Blood unites to a Criminal; so that perhaps it is less unhappy to be related to one, whose Crime is notorious, but not punished, than to an unfortunate Man, whose Innocence was found out after his Punishment.

I have, I think, observed another Sort of Oddness in the Application of this Prejudice. Children are oftener reproached with the Infamy of their Fathers, than Fathers with that of their Children. Yet it seems to me, that a contrary Behaviour would be less unjust. For then Fathers would be punished for not rectifying the bad Inclinations of their Children, by a suitable Education; if we think otherwise, is it through a Sentiment of Compassion for old Age, or the barbarous Pleasure of poisoning the Life of those, who only begin their Career?

To clear up, in fine, what concerns Probity, it is necessary to know, whether Obedience to the Laws, and the Practice of usual Behaviour are sufficient to constitute an honest Man. When we reflect seriously on this Question, we find they are not sufficient for perfect Honesty. One can have a Sort of Probity that screens and secures him from the Reproaches of Men, at the same Time that he has a hard Heart, a mischievous Will, a savage Character, and low Sentiments; occasioned either by Interest, Education, Pride or Fear.

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But there is a Judge more clear-sighted, more severe and just, than either Laws or Manners; it is our interiour Sentiment, called Conscience.

The Laws not having pronounced Judgment against Faults more grievous in themselves, than a great many that have been condemned; and Manners not having taken in all that the Laws have omitted; it is happy for Men, that each of them has in his Heart a Judge, that protects and excuses others, or condemns himself.

How many Things are there, tolerated by Manners, which are more dangerous than what they proscribed? Should Satyr, or even a Jest that comes from a Superior, (which sometimes gives an irreparable Wound to him who is the Object of it,) be judged an innocent Thing? or a gratuitous Succour refused him through Neglect, whose Fate depends upon it; together with so many other Faults, which we all feel, and forbid ourselves so little?

These however, are Things which exact Probity should prohibit, and of which our Conscience is an infallible Judge. There are

are also many Things condemned by the Laws, which Manners tolerate.

I do not pretend to speak like a religious Man: The Institution of Religion is the Perfection, not the Basis of Morality; nor like a subtle Metaphysician, but a moral Philosopher, who is supported by Reason, and proceeds only by Argument. I need not therefore, examine whether this Conscience is, or is not an innate Sentiment, it is enough, if it be an acquired Light; and that the narrowest Conceptions have more Knowledge of Justice or Injustice, from their Conscience; than they could have learned from Laws or Manners.

This Knowledge is the Measure of our Obligations: We are bound, with Regard to others, to all, we believe, we have a Right to expect from them. Men have a Right to expect from us, not only what they look upon as just, but also, what we ourselves esteem so; though they neither required or foresaw it: Our Conscience forms the Extent of their Right.

The greater our Knowledge is, the more Duties have we to discharge; if our Mind does not inspire us with these Sentiments
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by the Duty, it suggests at least, the Manner of proceeding, and demonstrates the Obligation we lie under to satisfy them.

There is another Principle of Intelligence that regards this Subject, which is superiour to Wit itself; it is Sensibility of Soul, which gives a Sort of Sagacity in praise-worthy Actions, and goes further than the Penetration of Wit alone.

We can say, that the Heart has Ideas, which are proper to itself; we may observe between two Men, whose Minds are equally penetrating, profound, and extended on Subjects purely intellectual, what a Superiority he gains, who has Sensibility of Soul, when Subjects belonging to it are treated.

How many Ideas are there, which cannot be attained by those who have not a certain Warmth of Heart? This Warmth joined with Vivacity, makes sensible Souls fall into some Faults, which others do not commit; but they are by far the most preferable, on Account of the Abundance of Good which they produce.

Sensible

Sensible Souls have more Existence than others; Good and Evil are multiplied in their Regard. They have besides, a very great Advantage in Society, by being persuaded of the Truths, which the Mind is only convinced of. Conviction is often passive, Persuasion always active. It is the Mind alone, that can, and ought to form a Man of Probity; and it is Sensibility forms a virtuous Man. This I shall explain in the following Manner.

Whatever the Laws require, Manners recommend, and Conscience inspires, are all united in this Axiom, so well known, and so little cleared up. *Do not to another, what you would not have done to yourself.* The exact and precise Observation of this Maxim forms true Probity. *Do to another, what you would have done to yourself.* This is Virtue.

At first Sight, it appears, that Lawgivers were covetous and narrow-minded Men, who having no need of others, were only solicitous to prevent Harm to themselves, and dispensed themselves from doing any Good. This Idea appears the more probable, as the first Legislators were Princes, Chief-

thieftains, those in a Word, who had the most to lose, and the least to gain. Wherefore the Laws are confined to Prohibitions: yet when we reflect on their Conduct, we find, that they have acted in this Manner, through Wisdom. Manners have gone further than the Laws, and both arose from the same Principle; even Conscience itself is kept within the Bounds of inspiring a Repugnance to Evil. Virtue being superior to Probity, requires that Good should be done, and inspires the Desire of it.

Probity forbids, and Virtue commands; Probity is esteemed, and Virtue respected; Probity consists almost in Inaction, Virtue acts. Gratitude is due to Virtue, but not to Probity; because a Man of Understanding, had he no other Object in View, but his Interest, can have no surer Means of attaining it than Probity.

I am not ignorant of the Objections which may be drawn from happy Crimes; but I know likewise, that there are different Degrees of Happiness; and that the Probability of Danger and of Success, should be valued and compared with the Happiness that is proposed; and that there is no Happiness, even where our Hopes are the best ground-

grounded, can countervail the Loss of Honour, or even the Danger of losing it. Thus in judging such a Question, only by Computation, it will appear, that Honesty is always the best Choice that can be made. It would not be difficult to give a moral Demonstration of this Truth; but there are Principles, which should not be called into Question. It often happens, that the most evident Truths contract by their Examination, a problematical Air, which they never should have.

Virtue is lodged in the Heart; it is a Sentiment, an Inclination to Good, a Love of Humanity; it bears the same Proportion, with Regard to good and laudable Actions, that Vice does to Crimes; it is the Relation of the Cause to the Effect.

In distinguishing Virtue and Probity, in observing the Difference of their Nature, it is moreover necessary, (in order to know the just Value of each) to give Attention to Persons, Times and Circumstances.

There are some Men whose Probity deserves more Praise than the Virtue of others. Should we expect only the same Actions from those, whose Means are so dif-

different? Shall one Man in the Bosom of Wealth and Plenty, have only the same Duties and Obligations with another, who is besieged on every Side, with all Sorts of Want? This would not be just; Probity is the Virtue of the Poor; Virtue should be the Probity of the Rich.

Some Actions are attributed to Virtue, wherein it has no share. A Service offered out of Vanity, or promised out of Weakness, does but little Honour to Virtue; in this Case, Probity requires its being fulfilled.

When we raise a Man of our Name from an unhappy Situation, wherein we might have shared his Shame; is it Generosity that prompts us to it? It is at most, but Decency, or perhaps-Pride.

On the other Hand, we praise and ought to praise Acts of Probity, built on a Principle of Virtue. If a Man restores what was committed to his Trust, which no other Person knew any Thing of; in this he does but his Duty, because to do otherwise, would be a Crime; his Action notwithstanding does, and ought to do him Honour. It is thought, that he who does

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not commit evil, in certain Circumstances, is capable of doing the Good they require. Nothing but Virtue in a simple Act of Probity deserves to be praised.

If an unfortunatè Man, pressed with Wants, humbled with the Shame of his Misery, resists the most critical Occasions. If a Man in Prosperity forgets not that there are unhappy Men, if he enquires after them, and prevents their Desires; I esteem and praise both these Men, but admire the first.

The Praises that are given to some Degrees of Honesty and to some Virtues, serve only to condemn the most Part of Mankind. Yet they should not be refused; nor should we go back, and inspect too narrowly and severely into the Principles of Actions, when they tend to the Good of Society. It is a wise and advantageous Method to encourage Men to good Actions: They are capable of following the Maxims of Virtue, as well as of Vice.

Virtue is acquired by the Glory there is in practising it. If we begin out of Self-Love, we continue in it out of Honour, and persevere out of Habit. Let a Man the
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Quality.

A Man of Probity is guided by Education, by Custom, Interest or Fear. A virtuous Man acts with Goodness.

A Man of Honour has noble Thoughts and Sentiments. It is not the Law he obeys; nor is he directed by Reflection, much less by Imitation; he thinks, speaks and acts with a Sort of Assurance and Haughtiness, and seems to be his own Law-giver.

We are freed from the Laws by Power, we withdraw ourselves from them by Credit, and elude them with Address; the Want of Sentiment is made up; that of Manners is supplied with Politeness; and Virtue is imitated by Hypocrisy. Honour is the *Instinct* of Virtue, and forms its Courage. It does not examine, it acts without Disguise, very often without Prudence, and is a Stranger to Timorousness, or false Shame, which stifle so many Virtues in weak Minds; for weak Characters lie under the double Inconveniency of not being able to answer their Virtues, and of serving as Instruments to the Vices of all those, who govern them.

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Though Honour be a natural Quality, it unfolds itself by Education, is sustained by Principles, and fortified by Examples. We cannot therefore awaken the Ideas, renew the Sentiment, or raise the Advantage and Glory of it too often; nor attack every Thing, that can prejudice it.

Reflections on this Subject, can serve as Preservatives against the Corruption of Manners, which slacken every Day. My Intention is not to renew the Reproaches, which, at all Times, have been made against every Age Men lived in; the Repetition of which, would make us believe, they are not better grounded at one Time, than at another. I am persuaded there has been always a Distribution of Virtues and Vices pretty near equal; but they might have been unequally shared, at different Times, between one Nation and another. There are Ages more or less famous; and ours does not appear to be the Age of Honour.

We are not certainly now, as nice and scrupulous in maintaining our mutual Ties as heretofore. When a Man was formerly engaged in any Proceedings that were to-

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lerated by the Laws, but condemned by Honour; the offended Person was not the only one who resented them, every generous Man took his Part, and did him Justice by a publick and general Contempt of his Adversary.

Now a days, those who are the most cried down, have some Regard paid them, even without a View of Interest. I have not, you are told, Reason to complain of them personally, why should I therefore repair the Harm done? what Weakness! By this Method, we shew how little we understand the Interest of Society, and consequently our own. If all honest Men resolved to make this a common Cause, their Confederacy would be very strong. When Men of Wit and Honour understand each other, Fools and Knaves act but a very indifferent Part. There are no others, unhappily, but Knaves, that conspire and form an Alliance together; honest Men must stand by themselves.

Formerly some Actions were concealed, which made those who committed them blush, if they happened to be discovered. At present they are committed openly, and consequently must be in greater Number, whereas

whereas Constraint and Shame kept a great many Men within Bounds.

I know no Vice but cheating at Cards, that is more cried down in our Age, than in the last. And yet we see Men suspected of this Practice well received. The only Justice which is done, in this Case, is to make use of a great deal of Politeness and Evasions, in order to excuse our not playing with them; which Behaviour less resembles Contempt than Precaution. But a Man of the World, whose Conduct is irreproachable in this, and in the Point of Bravery, is deemed a Man of unquestionable Honour. Though he should profess himself your Friend, have no Dispute with him, on Interest, Ambition, or Self-Love. If he only fears to lessen his Credit, by making use of it, he will certainly fail you, on an essential Occasion, and be blamed by no Body for it. You think you have a Right to reproach him, but he is more surprized than confounded at it; and remains still a Man of Honour. He cannot conceive, how you can look upon a simple Overture of Politeness, as an Engagement; this Politeness so much recommended, saves us often from Baseness, it would be happy for us,

it had only palliated some mean and undesigning Actions.

There are certainly some Actions so blameable in themselves, that whatever Interpretation is given them, it cannot justify them; or make them even equivocal. A Man of a gay airy Temper finds out the Secret of avoiding the Dishonour, attending such Actions, if he has Courage enough to be the first to publish them himself, and to banter those, who are tempted to blame him; we dare not reproach him, when we see he glories in them. His Boldness is his Justification, and by reproaching him we only expose ourselves to Ridicule, which we dare not do. Thus, we begin to doubt whether he be really in the Fault, and fear we may be so ourselves. In the ordinary Way of thinking, to foresee an Objection is to refute it; without being obliged to answer to it; and in what regards Manners, to prevent a Reproach is to destroy it.

A Man who has deceived another, in the most cunning, artful, and criminal Manner, far from having any Remorse or Shame for it, on the contrary applauds himself for his Address; he keeps it private in order to succeed, not for having suc-

succeeded; and imagines only, he has won a good Game at *Chefs*, whilst another who is cheated by him, believes he has lost through his own Fault, and only blames himself. Resentment is now become too noble a Sentiment; scarce do we think ourselves worthy to hate, and Vengeance is no more than an useful Revenge, which is employed, as a Means to succeed, and on Account of the Advantage that results from it.

This Manner of thinking, this Neglect of Manners disparages even those, whom it does not dishonour, and becomes more and more dangerous for Society. Those who can pretend to the Glory of giving Example by their Rank and Knowledge, seem to have too little Respect for Principles, even when they do not violate them. They are not sensible that not only their Actions, but also the Fickleness of their Discourse, and the Sentiments they shew, are the Example they give. The Vulgar having no Principles for Want of Education, have no other Curb but Fear, and no Guide but Imitation. It is in the middle State of Life, that Probity is as yet, in the highest Esteem.

This Depravation of Manners does not however hinder Virtue and Honour from being much boasted of; those who have the least of either, know how necessary it is for them, that others should not be so. Men would have been ashamed formerly, to advance certain Maxims, if they had contradicted them by their Actions: Their Discourse formed a Sort of Prepossession in Favour of their Sentiments. At present, Discourses are of such little Consequence, that a Man may be told sometimes, he has a great deal of Honesty, though he should himself speak in Praise of it. Good Discourses however, can be always useful to Society; but we do not truly do ourselves Honour, or make ourselves worthy of talking in such a Strain, but by our Conduct. This is a new Engagement, which we should not be afraid to make, whereas it is useful to acquit ourselves of it.

It is said, that formerly there reigned amongst us a Sort of fanatick Honour, and this happy Madness is attributed to a barbarous Age. It were to be wished, it was renewed in our Time; the Light we have acquired, would serve to regulate this Infatuation, without lessening it. Besides

sides no Excess on this Head is to be apprehended; Probity has its Limits, and it is much, if it reaches to the most Part of Mankind; but Virtue and Honour can extend and raise themselves to an infinite Degree; their Bounds may be always removed farther off, but are never surpassed.



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C H A P.

C H A P. IV.

On Reputation and Fame.

MEN are destined to live in Society, and are moreover obliged to it, as they want each other : In this Respect, they are in a mutual Dependence. Nor are they bound only by material Wants ; they have a moral Existence, which depends on their reciprocal Opinions.

There are but few Men, who are sure and satisfied enough with the Opinion they have of themselves, to be indifferent about that of others ; nay there are some, who are more uneasy about it, than the Wants of Life.

The Desire of obtaining and preserving a Place in the Esteem and Opinion of Men, has given Birth to Reputation and Fame, two powerful Springs of Society, which arise from the same Principle, but whose Means and Effects are not altogether the same.

A great many Means serve equally for Reputation and for Fame, and only differ in the Degrees; others are exclusively fit for one or the other.

An honest Reputation is within the Reach of most Men: It is obtained by social Virtues and the constant Practice of our Duties. This Kind of Reputation is neither shining or extensive, but it is often the most useful.

Wit, Talents, and Genius procure Celebrity, which is the first Step towards Fame; but the Advantage of it, perhaps is less real than we imagine. Whatever is truly useful to us, costs us but little; rare and shining Things are those which require the most Labour and Pains, and whose Enjoyment is purely ideal.

There are two Sorts of Men proper for Fame. The first, who make themselves illustrious, have a Right to it: Others, that is to say, Princes are made subject and tied down to it: They cannot escape Fame. We equally remark the tallest Man in a Crowd, and him, who stands on a rising Ground: And we distinguish at the same Time,

Time, whether the Superiority of the one over the other, comes from the Person, or the Place he is situated in. Such is the Relation and Difference between great Men and Princes, who have no other Merit but their Title.

But let us pass this Crowd of Princes by, without preferring them to, or excluding them from this Title; and let us only consider Fame, with Regard to Men, who have a personal Claim to it.

The Qualities which are solely proper for Fame, appear with Lustre. Such are the Qualities of Statesmen, destined to form the Glory, Happiness or Misfortune of a People.

Some of the Talents required for Fame, would be useless, and sometimes dangerous in private Life. There have been some great Men, whom if some happy Circumstances had not made so, they would perhaps, have been ever judged incapable of any great Action.

Reputation and Fame may be very different, and yet subsist together.

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A Statesman should neglect nothing to acquire a good Reputation; but he can depend only upon Fame, which alone can justify and secure him in the Assaults made against his Reputation. He is answerable to the World, but not to blind, rash, or self-interested Persons.

Not but that one can merit at the same Time, a great Fame, and a very bad Reputation; but Fame sustained chiefly on Facts, is commonly better grounded than Reputation, whose Principles can be equivocal. Fame is constant and uniform; Reputation is seldom or never so.

The Reasons that great Men may have to console themselves on the Injustice done to their Reputation, should not induce them to sacrifice it lightly to their Fame, because they reflect a Brightness and Lustre on each other. When one is forced to sacrifice his Reputation, on Account of some hard Circumstances attending his State, it is a Misfortune he must be sensible of, and requires all the Courage, the Love of publick Good can inspire. One must love Humanity in the most generous Manner, to serve it at the Expence of Reputation;
or

or else he must despise Men too much, by having no Regard for their Judgments; would he in this Supposition serve them? When the Sacrifice of Reputation to Fame is not forced by Duty, it is a surprizing Folly, because Reputation is more really enjoyed than Fame.

Friendship, Esteem, Respect and Consideration are only paid us by those we live with; it is therefore more advantageous to have a good, than an extensive Reputation.

If an illustrious Man appears amongst those, who without knowing him personally, set forth his Praises in his Presence, he doubtless must enjoy his Character with Pleasure; and if he is not tempted to discover himself, it is because he has it in his Power, and gives free Play to his Self-Love. But if it was absolutely impossible for him to make himself known, his Pleasure being no longer free, perhaps his Situation would be painful to him; and would be almost the same, as if he heard another's Praises, not his own. The like Reflection may be made on the contrary Situation of a Man, whose Name is in Contempt, of which he is supposed to be
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an unknown Witness : He enjoys in the Midst of his Torment, a Sort of Consolation arising from the Relation opposed to the Pain of the first, whom we have supposed obliged to Silence.

If Celebrity was reduced to its intrinsic Value, it would lose a great many Followers. The most extensive Reputation is always limited; even Fame is never universal. To consider Men numerically, how many are there, who never heard *Alexander's* Name mentioned? This Number far exceeds those, who know he was the Conqueror of *Asia*. How many Men are there, who were ignorant of *Koulikan's* Existence, at the Time he changed one Part of the Face of the Earth?

The Earth has narrow Bounds, and Fame can ever extend itself, without ever reaching them. What a Character of Weakness it is, to be able to grow for ever, without ever attaining a limited Term!

At least we imagine, that the Admirati-
on of knowing Men can compensate for the
Ignorance of others. But what Fame
chiefly consists in, is in counting and mul-
tiplying of Votes, not in appretiating them;
and

and in this Case, it seems, that the Fruit of Fame is limited to the Homage paid to the Syllables of a Name: Yet a great many spare neither Pains nor Labour, to arrive at it; and if they fail becoming illustrious, they endeavour at least to make themselves famous; they have a Mind to be talked of, and like rather to be unhappy, than obscure. The Man, whose Misfortunes draw the Attention of the Publick on him, is half consoled.

When the Desire of Celebrity, consists in Sentiment, it can be, according to its Object, esteemable in him who experiences it, and useful to Society; but if it be Extravagance or Madness, it soon becomes unjust, artful and disparaging by the Practices it makes use of: Pride is the Cause of as much Baseness as Interest. This is what produces so many tottering and usurped Reputations.

Nothing can make us more indifferent about Reputation, than to observe in what Manner it is often established, how it destroys itself, how it varies, and also to observe the Authors of these Revolutions.

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Scarce can a Man appear in any Career whatsoever, let him shew never so few happy Dispositions, and even sometimes without them, but every one is eager to serve, to usher him in, and exalt him: It is always in the Beginning, that a Man is a Prodigy. Whence proceeds this Eagerness? Is it caused by Generosity, Goodness or Justice? No, it is Envy, which does not appear so, even to those, whom it excites. In every Station, there are always some Men of superiour Talents. Subalterns who cannot themselves aspire to the first Places, endeavour to remove others from them, by raising and encouraging Rivals.

It may be said perhaps, that those who cannot attain to the first Places, are indifferent about the Persons that fill them. But we understand very little of the Nature of Passions, when we make them reason thus: They are swayed by Motives, but never by Principles.

Envy feels and acts, but neither reflects or foresees: As soon as it succeeds in its Undertaking, it endeavours to destroy its own Work. We endeavour to pull him down,

down, whom we have helped to rise; and we think it unpardonable in him, to have no further Need of our Assistance.

Thus Reputations are formed and destroyed. Sometimes they are maintained, either by the Solidity of the Merit, which supports them, or the Artifice of those who being raised by a Faction or Cabal, know better than others, the Springs that make them move, or stop their Progression.

It often happens that the Publick is surprized at some Reputations, it has raised itself; it enquires into the Cause, and not being able to discover it, (as it has no Existence,) it conceives greater Admiration and Respect for the Phantom it has created. These Reputations are like Fortunes, which having no real Foundation, are supported on Credit, and make the greater Figure for it.

As the Publick raises Reputations by Caprice, so particular Men usurp them by Intrigue, or a Sort of Impudence, which should not be dignified with the Name of Self-Love. They proclaim their own Merit: We at first, laugh at their Claim to it; but they repeat the same Discourses so often,

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and with so much Assurance, that, at length, they gain their End, and impose it upon us. We forgot where we first heard it, and at last, believe it; it is repeated like the confused Noise of a City, which is never examined into.

Even Associations are formed for such Practices, which are called Cabals.

Some undertake on Purpose, to raise a Reputation, and succeed in their Attempt.

Let such a Reputation be never so shining, the Person who is the Subject of it, is frequently the only one deceived in it. Those who have created it, know what Value to put on it; though it often happens, that some of them finish, by respecting their own Work.

Others, struck with the Contrast of the Person and the Reputation, and finding nothing that can justify the publick Opinion, do not dare to express their own Sentiments. They acquiesce in the Falsehood out of Timidity, Complaisance or Interest; so that it is no rare Thing, to hear a Number of People repeat the same Discourses, who disavow them in their Hearts. Men
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for the most Part, do not dare to blame or praise alone ; and are not less timorous in protecting, than in attacking ; there are but few who have Courage enough, not to want Partizans or Accomplices, I do not say in order to make their Sentiments known, but to persist in them ; they endeavour to strengthen themselves in their own Opinions, by suggesting them to others, which if they cannot compass, they abandon them.

However it be, usurped Reputations which produce the greatest Illusion, have something ridiculous in them, that should hinder their being too much prized. Yet the same Practices are pursued, even by those, who have Merit enough, not to want them.

When Merit serves as a Foundation for Reputation, it is very ill judged to join Artifice to it ; because it hurts more the Reputation we have already acquired, than it serves that, which we are ambitious of. If the Publick finds it out, and it finds such Tricks out at the End ; it revolts, and degrades the best acquired Glory. This is an Injustice ; but the Publick should not have a Right to become unjust. Envy, to which
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the slightest Pretex^ts are sufficient, applauds
 itself, for having such Motives; and lays hold
 on them with Ardour. Envy never pardons
 Merit, but when it is deceived by its own
 Malignity; and believes it finds out Faults
 it can feed on. It consoles itself with pull-
 ing down on one Side, what it is forced to
 admire on the other; nor is it so desirous
 to destroy, what it has Hopes of injuring
 and reviling.

A Sort of Indifference about our own
 Merit, is the surest Prop of Reputation;
 we should not affect opening the Eyes of
 those, who are dazzled with Light. Mo-
 desty is the only Lustre, that is allowed to
 be added to Glory.

Though Artifice be a shameful Means of
 acquiring a Reputation, yet there is an Art,
 and even a laudable Art, that grows from
 Prudence and Wisdom, which is not to be
 rejected. Men of Wit have more Advan-
 tages than others, not only in what regards
 Glory, but also in acquiring and deserving
 a virtuous Reputation. A refined Under-
 standing, as contrary to Falsehood, as to
 Imprudence; a sure and quick Discern-
 ment, know how to make a proper Choice
 of Favours; and are the Cause, why we
 speak,

ſpeak, are ſilent, and act opportunely. There is no Man but what has, at ſome Time, an Occaſion of doing a good and courageous Action, and that, without Danger. But a Fool ſlips the faireſt Opportunity, for Want of perceiving it: A Man of Wit feels it, and lays hold on it. Experience proves that Wit alone is not ſufficient for it; it alſo requires a noble undaunted Heart.

I ſaw ſome of theſe ſhining Succeſſes; and am perſuaded, that the very Perſon who was loaded with Praises, felt how little it coſt him to obtain them; but this did not leſſen his Worth.

I have obſerved others, whoſe Hearts were full of Kindneſs and good Will, and who practiced the moſt frequent Acts of Virtue; yet for Want of underſtanding, and *timing* their Actions, they were not near as much eſteemed, as they deſerved. Their Merit raiſed no Senſation; ſcarce was it ſuſpected. It is true, that if by ſome lucky Accident, ſimple and uniform Merit comes to be remarked, it acquires a ſudden Luſtre: It is praiſed with Complacency, and every one is willing to augment it. Even Envy applauds it, without be-
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lying her Character, and draws an Advantage from it, by humbling others.

Since Reputations are formed and destroyed with so much Ease, it is not surprising they vary, and are often contradictory in the same Person. Such a one has a Reputation in one Place, which in another is quite different: He has that he deserves the least; and is refused that he has the greatest Right to. We see Examples of it in every Order. I cannot forbear here entering into a Detail, which will clear up these Principles, by the Application I shall endeavour to make.

A Man is taxed with Avarice, because he despises Ostentation, and denies himself whatever is superfluous, in order to help some unhappy Men, whose Misery is not publickly known. The Generosity of another is praised who squanders away with vain Glory, what he gets by Artifice or Violence; he makes Presents, but refuses at the same Time to pay his Debts: His Magnificence is admired, when he is at once the Victim of Pageantry and Avarice.

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The Insolence of another is blamed, who does not yield with Baseness to usurped Authority : Another's Anger is condemned, because his Patience did not sink to Abjection. As Patience has its Bounds, Men who are naturally mild and peaceable, when their Measure is filled, are often unreasonably in the wrong. We cannot believe of what Importance it is for the Good of Peace, not to suffer ourselves to be too much oppressed, unless we consent to be vilified.

On the contrary, the Mildness of a stubborn Man is much boasted of, who is obstinate by Character, and polite through Pride.

One Woman is dishonoured, because she published her Fault by the Greatness of her Grief and Shame ; whilst another secures herself from Reproaches, by the Excess of her Impudence : Nor is she the Object even of secret Contempt. Men hate what they dare not punish ; but they despise only what they dare blame openly. Their Actions determine more their Judgments, than their Judgments regulate their Actions.

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If we pass from private Men to those, who appearing on a more elevated Theatre, can the more easily be known; we shall find, that they are judged with as little Mercy and Justice.

A Minister is accused of Hard-heartedness, because he is just, rejects Sollicitations that are *paid*, and refuses to agree to what Courtiers call *Affairs*. This Traffick is injurious to Merit, scandalous for the Publick, disparaging to Authority, and dangerous for the State.

A Prince is reckoned severe, because he loves rather to prevent Faults than be obliged to punish them; he is deemed cruel, because he suppresses subaltern Tyranny the most odious of all. The Laws that are most severe against Oppressors are the mildest for Society; but private Interest is always fond of making itself the Lawgiver of publick Order.

Lewis XII. one the best and consequently the greatest Kings that *France* ever had, was accused of Avarice, because he did not oppress the People, in order to enrich some Favourites without Merit. The People

should be the Favourites of Kings, and Princes have no Right to Superfluity, but when the People have what is necessary. The Reproaches they dared to make him, only proved his Goodness: Nay, their Insolence was carried to such a Degree, that he was ridiculed on the Stage. *I like better, said that good Prince, that my Avarice should make them laugh, than if it had made them shed Tears.* The Reproaches of Courtiers are often equivalent to their Praise, and their Praises are nothing else but Snares.

As to what regards Reputations of Honesty, it is surprizing that there are so few of them established, considering the Facility with which they are sometimes usurped. Most People were formerly Hypocrites of Virtue, as they are now a days of Vice. Some Men having observed, that austere Virtue is not always exempt from a little Roughness; because one is not so circumspect, who is irreproachable in his Conduct; and has not so watchful an Eye upon himself, when he does not fear to be betrayed; these Men draw an Advantage from their natural Fierceness, and often carry it to Excess, in order to establish the Severity of their Virtues: Their Declamations against Impudence are continual Proofs of their
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own. How many Men are there, whose Roughness is their only Virtue! Giddiness is also but a very equivocal Proof of Candour: We should trust only to the Giddiness of those, to whom it is often prejudicial.

Roughness and Giddiness are Faults of Character, which neither absolutely exclude, much less suppose Virtue; but which spoil it, when they are united with it. Yet how many Times have we been deceived by these outward Appearances?

Though we too easily agree to some Reputations of Probity, yet we destroy others with a more blameable and unworthy Temerity, through Passion or Interest. We shamefully lay hold on the Misfortunes of a Man, in order to attack his Probity; and condemn the Reputation of another, only to raise an Opinion of our own Virtue.

If a Man has Courage enough to vindicate a Reputation, which he thinks unjustly attacked; he has not always the Honour done him, of being judged a Dupe; (this Suspicion would be too ridiculous;) but he is supposed to have some Interest in maintaining so extraordinary a

Thesis. Let a Man be never so palpably deceived in judging unfavourably, he is only suspected of an Excess of Penetration; but if his Error lies in judging favourably, his Opinion is looked upon as the Height of Weakness: Yet the Error is the same, though the Character be very different.

These false Judgments do not always proceed from Malice: Men do a great many Injustices without bad Designs, through Levity, Precipitation, Folly, Rashness, or Imprudence. The Decisions which are hazarded with most Confidence, make the deepest Impressions.

Who are they that enjoy the Privilege of pronouncing Judgment? Men who by the Dint of braving Contempt, acquire at length some Degree of Respect, and set themselves up for Examples. Men who have Opinions, but never have Sentiments; who change, quit, and return to their Opinions again, without knowing it, nor even suspecting it; and who are obstinate without being constant.

These however, are the Judges of Reputations; these are the Men whose Sentiments are despised, and whose Approbation

bation is sought after; who procure Esteem and Consideration without having any themselves.

Consideration differs from Celebrity; even Reputation and Fame do not always give it; and it can be acquired without Grandeur or Shew.

Consideration is a Sentiment of Esteem mixed with a Sort of personal Respect, which a Man inspires in his own Favour. We enjoy it equally amongst our Inferiors, our Equals, and those who are superiour to us by their Rank or Birth. We can be, with the Advantages of an elevated Station in Life, of an illustrious Family, superiour Wit or Talents, we can be, I say, without Consideration; nor is it annexed even to Virtue, that is alone, and stripped of other Advantages; and still it can be attained without any great Depth of Understanding, and even in Spight of the Obscurity of our Birth or State.

Consideration does not necessarily attend a great Man: A Man of Merit has already a Right to it; he is a Man that is endowed with all the Qualities and Advantages of his State, which he never sullies in any Man-

ner. To give, in fine, a more precise Idea of Consideration, it is obtained by the Re-union of Merit, Decency and Respect for one's self.

As Consideration is acquired, so it is also usurped. We see some Men whose Merit is boasted of, but if we examine in what it consists, we are surpris'd at their Emptiness. We find that all this Merit so much bragged of, is confined to an Air, or to an important and self-sufficient Tone of Voice; a little Impertinence is not useless to it; and sometimes their Looks are sufficient. They assume the Carriage of respectable Men, and are for this Reason respected; otherwise, they would not be so much as esteem'd.

We should conclude from this Analysis we have made, and from the Discussion we have entered into, that Fame is the Reward of superior Talents sustained by great Efforts: That Reputation usurped by Artifice is never sure, and is sometimes shameful: That the most honest Reputation is always the most useful; and that every one can aspire to Consideration in their respective Stations.

CHAP.

C H A P. V.

On great Men.

HAVING considered the Objects that regard Men in general, let us adapt our Reflections to some Classes of Society, and begin by great Men.

A great Man is a Word, whose Reality exists no longer but in History. A great Man was one born a Subject, illustrious by himself, and within the Reach of the Laws; yet powerful enough not to obey them but freely; which made him often a Rebel with Regard to his Sovereign, and a Tyrant over other Subjects. There are no more of them.

It might have been an Advantage to the People to see these great Men humbled, and lose their Privileges; but it is a greater Advantage to the State, that they have lost them, than if they had preserved them.

If we had a Mind, now, to make a List of those, to whom this Title is given,

or of those, who arrogate it to themselves, it would be no hard Matter to know where to begin, but it would be impossible to find out precisely where to end. We should come down as far as Burghers, without being able to distinguish the Shade of Separation. All those who go to *Versailles* imagine they go to Court, and belong to it.

The most Part of those who pass for great Men, are only so in the Opinion of the Vulgar, who see them at a Distance. Struck with their exterior Shew, they admire them from afar, without knowing that they have nothing to hope and little more to fear from them. Nor do they know, that in order to become Masters by Accident, they are obliged elsewhere to act in the same Manner, that the common People do in their Regard.

As they are more elevated than powerful, an indispensable and ruinous Pomp puts them continually in Want of Favours; so that it is quite out of their Power to relieve an honest Man, even when they are desirous to do it. In order to have it in their Power, they should keep their Luxury within Bounds; but Luxury admits of

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no Bounds, but an absolute Impossibility of growing. Nothing but Wants can bear being stinted, in order to help Superfluity.

As to what regards the Fear they may inspire, I know how many contrary Examples can be opposed to my Sentiment. But it is the Error in which we are on this Subject, that multiplies them. Our Fears would vanish, if we considered, that great Men as well as those in the lowest Station, have the same Master; that they are tied down to the same Laws, which are seldom ineffectual, when their Protection is claimed confidently; but this Courage is not ordinary, and a greater Degree of it is required to annihilate an imaginary Power, than to resist a real one.

Men have more Timorousness in their Minds than in their Hearts; and voluntary Slaves make more Tyrants, than Tyrants make forced Slaves.

This is doubtless what distinguishes the Courage of the Mind from that of the Heart, which is a very just Distinction, though it is not always well fixed. It appears to me, that the Courage of the Mind consists in seeing Dangers, Evils,

and Misfortunes, precisely as they are; and consequently the Resources and Remedies for them. To see them less than they are, argues a Want of Knowledge; and to see them greater, a Want of Courage. Fear exaggerates them, and consequently makes them grow; blind Courage obscures and disguises, but does not always weaken them, they both hinder us to triumph over them.

The Courage of the Mind often supposes and requires that of the Heart; the Courage of the Heart is only made Use of in material Evils, physical Dangers, or those which are relative to them. The Courage of the Mind is applied in all the delicate Circumstances of Life; we often see Men who dare encounter the most evident Dangers, but we seldom see any, who do not suffer themselves to sink under Misfortunes; and who know how to draw Means from them, for some happy Success. How many timorous Men are there at Court, who have been Heroes in the War?

To return to great Men, those who are Depositories of Authority, are not precisely what we understand by them; great Men are obliged to have Recourse to Men in Place,

Place, and have often more Need of it, than inferior People, who condemned to Obscurity, have no Opportunities of sueing for Favours, and no Pretensions to expect them.

Not but that there are many great Men who have Credit; but they owe it only to the Esteem they have acquired themselves, to their Services, and to the Want the State has yet of them.

But great Men who are only nominal having no direct Power or Credit, endeavour to partake of it by Art, Cringing, and Intrigue, which are Characters of Weakness. Dignities in fine create little more than Respect; Places give Power.

Though evident these Distinctions may be, it appears that those who live at Court, feel them more than they see them; their Conduct is more conformable to them than their Ideas; for they have no need of Reflection, to know whom it concerns them to please. People of an inferior Rank make no Doubt of their Credit; and in this consists one of the chief Advantages of great Men :
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By this Means they exact, as a Tribute, all the Services which are paid them with Submission.

It is not only out of Fear that Inferiors hesitate to press them on their Engagements; they are not sure of the Right they have to do it: The Grandeur of a great Man imposes upon an unhappy Wretch at whose Expences he was made so; he falls with Respect before the Work of his own Hands, as the Sculptor adored the Marble he made a God of.

It is true, that if this great Man falls into an irreparable Misfortune, the People become his most cruel Persecutors. The Respect paid him was like Adoration, and the Contempt he falls into, is like Impiety; the Idol was only knocked down, and the People reduce it to Powder.

Great Men are so persuaded of the Esteem their Pomp creates for them, even in the Minds of their Equals, that they neglect nothing that can support it. A Courtier is disgraced, as soon as his Fortune is spent; this is so true, that he who supports his Dignity, with criminal Resources is more considered, than one who

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has Greatness of Soul enough, to tie himself down to severe Justice; but then, when a Man falls, after having drained the most infamous and unjust Resources, he is in the Height of Disgrace; because there are no Vices generally allowed of, but such as are joined with Misfortunes.



C H A P.

C H A P. VI.

On Credit.

WH A T I have said of great Men gives me an Occasion to examine, what Credit is, its Principles, and its Effects.

Credit is the Use of another's Power; and is greater or less, in Proportion as this Use is more or less extensive and frequent. Credit argues therefore a Sort of Inferiority, at least relatively to the Power that is employed, whatever Superiority we may have in other Respects.

This is so true, that in speaking of Credit, that of a private Man with a Lord; of a Lord with a Minister; and of a Minister with a King is bragged of; and without our Mind's giving any Attention to it, the Idea it has of Credit is so just, that there is no one, who does not think it ridiculous to hear the Credit of one of our Sovereigns mentioned; unless it be the Credit he might have in *Europe*, with other Princes, his Equals, whose Union and Alliance

Alliance form in his Regard, a Sort of Superiority.

A Prince, whose Power is limited, may have more Credit in *Europe*, than the most powerful and absolute King in his own Dominions. Such a King's Power may alone be an Obstacle to his Credit. In every Age we have had Examples of it; nay private Men have sometimes had more Credit than their Monarchs.

I shall not enter on this Head, into a Detail that is foreign to my Subject; I only consider what regards private Men.

Credit is therefore the Relation that is from Want to Power; whether it be claimed for one's self or another; with this Difference, that to obtain a Favour for another, is Credit; and to obtain it for one's self, is being only protected.

Some Degrees of Credit which are not extremely honourable in their Nature, may be so in their Principles and Effects. The Principles of Credit are the personal Esteem and Consideration we enjoy; the Inclination of which we are the Object; the

the Interest we offer, or the Fear we inspire.

Credit founded on Esteem, is that which should please us the most; and can be deemed as a Justice paid to Merit. That, which we owe to Inclination, though it be less honourable in itself, is ordinarily surer than the first. Both yield almost always, to Hope or to Fear, that is to say, to Interest; whereas these are two Effects of the same Cause. So that when these different Motives are in Competition, it is easy to judge which of them must prevail.

The two first Motives to Credit are not commonly very powerful. It is against our will, we allow it to Merit. It looks too like Justice, and Self-love is better pleased to bestow Favours. On the other Hand, our Inclination determines us less than we imagine to oblige, though it makes us find Pleasure in it; it is often subordinate to other Motives, which are of more Weight than Friendship, though they are not so good and laudable.

Besides, Men in Place have but few Friends, nor are they sorry for it. Ambition

e in- bition and Affairs take them up too much,
 to leave a Place in their Hearts for Friend-
 ship; and that we bear them is not un-
 like Worship. When they seem to open
 themselves to their Friends, they seek on-
 ly to unbend their Minds by Dissipation.
 They are like spoiled Children, who are
 loved without a Return of Gratitude, and
 angry at the least Contradiction of their
 Will or Fancies. It must be allowed,
 they have frequent Opportunities of know-
 ing Men, of learning to esteem them but
 little, and to depend less upon them.
 They know that they are oftener besieged
 through Interest, than they are courted out
 of Taste or Esteem, even when they are
 worthy of it. They see the mean and
 criminal Practices which Competitors make
 Use of against each other, and judge from
 their Proceedings, what Value to put on
 their Attachment. Though Adulation
 pleases them as much as if it was sincere,
 yet the Meanness of its Motive does not
 always escape them; and Experience
 teaches them, how others like themselves
 have been deserted in their Disgrace. A
 little Suspicion is therefore pardonable in
 Men in Places and their Friendship should
 be better grounded than that of others.

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Since Merit and Friendship have so small a Share in Credit, it can be nothing else but a Tribute raised for Interest, a meer Bartering which Hope and Fear decide, and of which they are themselves the Exchange. We seldom refuse those we can oblige with Glory, and whose Acknowledgment does Honour to their Benefactors. This Glory is the Interest we receive from it: We refuse others much less, from whom we expect a Return, because this Expectation is a more sensible Interest to the most Part of Mankind; we grant almost every Thing to those whose Resentment we fear, especially if we can hide our Fear under the Mask of preventing their Desires. But if we cannot dissemble the true Motive, we soon take our Resolution. It seems we read in the Hearts of Men, that they approve interiorly the Conduct they would have followed themselves.

No Kind of Fear is so little dissembled as that which certain Men at Court inspire, whose State is despised, but whose domestick Intimacy or Circumstances may make them dangerous. They are treated with such Precaution, as gives Fear an Air
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of Prudence; for which Reason, no one is ashamed of it, because it seems, our Character cannot be disgraced by a Behaviour, which does Honour to our Wit. The Solicitations and simple Recommendations of this Sort of People have more Weight than those of the greatest Lords; and are more taken Notice of, than those of our Friends, especially, if they be old Friends, for the later the Date of Friendship is, the more Advantages it has. We do every Thing for those, whom we have a Mind to gain, or bring to an Engagement, but nothing for those we are sure of. The Privilege an old Friend has, is nothing more than his being refused the Preference, and obliged to approve the Denial; happy, if through an Excess of Confidence, our Motives are communicated to him.

So many Circumstances concur and cross each other in the Distribution of the least Favours, that it is a difficult Thing to know, how, or by whom they are granted. Hence it happens, that they are often dispensed without Generosity, and received without Acknowledgment; because it happens rarely, that a good Office falls upon Want, and more rarely that it prevents it.

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We harshly refuse what is necessary, and easily grant what is superfluous; we offer Services, but refuse Succour.

The Effects or Motives of Credit, are Interest, Consideration, and Generosity.

Those who employ their Credit out of a View of Interest are not worthy to pass even for Men of Credit. They are but vile Creatures protected, whose Disgrace is reflected on their Protectors. A Favour which is paid, villifies him that receives it, and dishonours him that grants it.

When Consideration is the Object we propose to ourselves, we commonly employ our Credit in order to make it known and to give it a Lustre. The Reputation alone of having acquired it is one of the surest Means of strengthening, extending, and even of procuring it; it is in every Shape, so endearing a Reward for it, that a great many Men would sacrifice the Reality for the Appearance. How many Men do we see pestered with Sollicitations on Account of a false Reputation of Credit? yet they take special Care not to turn their importunate Sollicitors off, by undeceiving them.

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Yet those, who in obliging propose to themselves so trifling an End, ought to be persuaded, that whatever Credit they may have, they cannot render as many Services, as they make Malecontents, who believe they have a privileged Right to their Protection.

It is not impossible for a Man whose Thoughts are taken up with the Desire of obliging to get a contrary Reputation, because the Number of good Offices done to Men can never equal their Wants. There is no kind of Credit that can fully answer the Reputation it procures; for the least Proofs of Credit multiply Demands. A Man who has often done good Offices out of Generosity, can be deemed disobliging and unkind, because he cannot answer the Demands of every Body that applies to him. It is for this Reason, that Men in Place cannot make Use of too much Humanity in order to soften such Denials as are necessary.

It may be imagined that the Gratitude of those they oblige, ought to be a Consolation to them, and compensate for the Injustice done them by others, whom they
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were forced to refuse. Yet nothing is more common than to see some Men, who sue for Favours with Eagerness, and often with Baseness, receive them with Indifference, as a Justice done them, and endeavour to make it appear, that they have not made the least Step towards them, and that only their Desires were prevented. This Conduct is not surely the Effect of delicate Gratitude, which leaves to our Benefactors, the Glory of their good Actions.

My Intention is not to disgust Benefactors: I am rather desirous to prevent their Distaste, and to inspire them with noble disinterested Sentiments, the Success of which is never uncertain. When we oblige generously, and seek no other Interest but the Pleasure of obliging, we have in it an infallible Recompence, which the Ingratitude of Men cannot rob us of. But if Benefactors are desirous of Gratitude, let their good Offices be done to Men of Merit, for these only are grateful and acknowledging.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

On fashionable Men.

THE *French*, at all Times, have gone through the least Changes in their Character of any *Péople* whatsoever. They are found to be the same to Day, they were at the Time of the *Crusade*, and in going up as far as the *Gauls*, we find also a great Resemblance. This Nation has always been lively, gay, generous, brave, sincere, presumptuous, inconstant, over-bearing, and inconsiderate. Their Virtues come from the Heart, and their Vices rise from their Wit. Their good Qualities correcting or countervailing their bad ones, perhaps equally conspire to make them, of all other Men, the most sociable. This is their proper Character, and no bad one, but I fear, that within some Time, they have abused it; they are not satisfied with being sociable, they must also be amiable, and I believe they have mistaken this Abuse for a Perfection, which wants to be proved, that is to say, explained.

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The fittest Qualities for Society are Politeness without Falshood; Candour without Rudeness; preventing others Desires without Baseness; Complaisance without Flattery; Regard without Constraint; and above all a Heart inclined to Good; thus the sociable Man is the most excellent Citizen.

An amiable Man, at least, the Man to whom this Title is given now a days, is extremely indifferent about the publick Good, highly desirous to please every Society he happens to be in, either by Taste or Chance, and ready to sacrifice each particular Member of it. He loves Nobody, is loved by no one, pleases all, and is often despised and courted by the same People.

By a very odd Contrast, he is always taken up with others, and satisfied only with himself; he expects his Happiness only from their Opinion, without thinking precisely of their Esteem, which he probably supposes, or whose Nature he is perhaps ignorant of. His immoderate Desire of amusing engages him to sacrifice the absent Friend he esteems the most, to the Railery of those he makes the least Account

count of, but who listen to him. As frivolous as he is dangerous, he places almost in good earnest, Slander and Calumny in the Rank of Amusements, without suspecting they produce any other Effects; and what is happy, and at the same Time most shameful in Manners, is, that the Judgment he forms of them happens sometimes to be just.

The particular Ties of a sociable Man are the Bonds that unite him more strongly to the State; those of an amiable Man are only new Dissipations, that retrench proportionally his essential Duties. A sociable Man inspires us with the Desire of living with him; and we only like to meet sometimes with an amiable Man. In fine, the Assemblage of Vices, Frivolousness, and Inconveniences in this Character, is such, that the amiable Man is often the least worthy of Love.

Yet our Ambition to attain to this Reputation becomes every Day a Sort of epidemical Disease: How then is it possible, not to be flattered with a Title that eclipses Virtue and pardons Vice! If a Man be dishonoured to such a Degree, that those who keep him Company are reproached

with it, his Companions allow every Accusation against him, nor is it by endeavouring to justify him, they excuse themselves: It is very true, they tell you; *but he is very amiable.* This Reason must be good, or else generally received, for there is no Reply made to it. A Man that sets his Vices off with Gaiety and Graces, is the most dangerous for Society, there is Nothing but what such a Behaviour makes supportable, and but what it hinders from being judged odious.

What happens from hence? Every one is desirous of being amiable, and no one cares to be any Thing else; their Duties are sacrificed to it, and I should say the Consideration they have acquired, was it lost by such a Behaviour. One of the most unhappy Effects of this frivolous Madness is the Contempt it inspires us with for our State of Life, and the Disdain of our Profession, for which we are chiefly accountable, and by which we should always seek the first and principal Glory.

A Magistrate looks upon Study and Labour as obscure Cares, which only become Men that are not fit for the polite World. He sees, that those who apply themselves
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to their Duties, are known only by Chance; when there happens to be Occasion of them; so that it is no rare Thing, to see some amiable Magistrates, who in Affairs of Importance, are less Judges than Solicitors, that recommend to their Colleagues the Interests of their Clients.

An Officer of a certain Rank believes that Application to military Affairs is the Business of Subalterns; thus Posts in the Army, would be no more than Distinctions of Rank, not Employments that require to be discharged.

A lettered Man, who by his Lucubrations could have instructed his Age, and transmitted his Name to Posterity, neglects and loses his Talents for Want of cultivating them: He had it in his Power to be reckoned amongst illustrious Men, but remains only a Man of Wit in Society.

Even Ambition, that formerly was so active, and is always so ardent a Passion aspires no longer at Fortune but by Intrigue and the Art of pleasing. The Principles of an ambitious Man were not heretofore more just than they are at present; nor were his Motives more Praise-worthy,

or his Proceedings more innocent; but his Labours might have been useful to the State, and might have sometimes inspired an Emulation to Virtue.

It will doubtless be said, that Society is become by the Desire every one has of being amiable in it, more delicious than it ever has been; this may be, but it is certain also that the State has lost what Society has gained in this Point, and that the Exchange is no Advantage.

What would be the Consequence, should this Contagion spread throughout all the other Professions? and this may be apprehended, when we see that it has reached an Order solely destined for Edification, in which, the amiable Qualities of our Days would have been formerly looked upon at least, as indecent.

Amiable Qualities being for the most Part founded on frivolous Things, the Esteem we bear them accustoms us insensibly to Indifference for those that should concern us the most. It seems that what regards the publick Good is foreign to us.

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Should a great General or Statesman render the most signal Services to the State, before we hazard our Esteem, we enquire if they be amiable Men, what their Agreeableness consists in, though there are perhaps some Graces, that do not always become a great Man to have in a superior Degree.

Every important Question, close Reasoning, and reasonable Sentiment are excluded from these shining and amiable Societies, and rise from the *bon ton*. It is not long since this Expression was invented, and it is already common, without being the better understood. This is what I think of it.

The *bon ton* in those who have the most Wit, consists in talking agreeably of Trifles, without allowing themselves the least Appearance of good Sense, (unless it be atoned for by the Graces of the Discourse) and in transgressing against Reason, when they are obliged to produce it, with as much Care as Modesty required formerly, when it was necessary to express a free Thought. Agreeableness is become so necessary, that even Slander would cease

to please, was it deprived of it. It is not enough to hurt, it is necessary above all things to amuse, else the most mischievous Discourse falls back on its Author, more than on him who is the Subject of it.

This pretended *bon ton*, though it be only an Abuse of Wit, still requires a great deal of it; wherefore it becomes a Jargon in Fools, which is unintelligible even to themselves; and as Fools form the greatest Number in every Society, this Jargon has prevailed. It is what we vulgarly call *Humbugging*, a fatiguing Heap of Words without Ideas; a Volubility of Discourse that makes Fools laugh, scandalizes Reason, puts modest or timorous Persons out of Countenance, and makes Society insupportable.

This pitiful Strain is sometimes less extravagant, and then it is most dangerous. This happens, when any one is sacrificed without his perceiving it, to the Raillery of an Assembly, and made at the same Time the Instrument and Victim of common Mirth, by the Things which are suggested to him, and the ingenious Concessions which are drawn from them.

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The first Trials of this Sort of Wit must have naturally succeeded, and as new Inventions always augment in Perfection, that is to say, encrease in Depravation, when their Principles are corrupted, Malice is now a Days, the Soul of certain Societies, and has ceased to be odious without even losing its Name.

Malice is at present but a Mode; the most eminent Qualities were not formerly sufficient to excuse it; they never could supply Society with as much as Malice takes away from it; whereas it undermines its Foundations, and is for this Reason, if not the Assemblage, at least the Result of Vices. Malice at present, is reduced to an Art, it serves those for Merit, who have no other, and often raises them to Consideration.

This is what produces such Swarms of little mischievous subaltern Imitators of silly Coxcombs, some of whom are found so harmless, their Character being so opposed to it, that they would have been very innocent good-natured Men had they followed the Dictates of their Heart, inso-much that I am sometimes tempted to pity them, it costs them so much to do Mis-

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chief. Wherefore we see some, who think it too hard a Task to play their Part, and abandon it; others flattered or corrupted with the Progress they have made, go on with it. The only Persons that have succeeded in this preposterous Contrariety are those, who born with a depraved Heart, a disordered Imagination, false Wit, shallow Brains without Principles, who despising Virtue, and incapable of Remorse, have the Pleasure to see themselves the Heroes of a Society, which they should be the Horror of.

It is a curious Sight enough to see the Subordination that reigns amongst such as form this Sort of Associations. There is no State where it is better regulated. They commonly signalize themselves on Foreigners, whom Chance has thrown in their Way; thus Strangers were formerly sacrificed in some Countries, where their bad Fortune forced them to land. But when new Victims are wanting, then a civil War begins. The head Man amongst them maintains his Empire, by sacrificing alternately his Subjects one to another. Whoever is the Victim of the Day, is unmercifully oppressed by all the others, who are overjoyed to drive the Storm off their own Heads;

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Heads; thus Cruelty is often the Effect of Fear. The Subalterns however make Trials one upon another, they endeavour to dart only their keenest Shafts, and would willingly sting their Antagonists without being rude, but as Wit is not always as volatile as Self-Love is sensible, they often give each other such abusive Language, that nothing but Experience can hinder its Consequence to be apprehended. If some honourable Medium could be found out between a distrustful Temper, and voluntary Abjection, we should not live with less Pleasure, and should have more Union and mutual Regard.

Things being on the Footing they now are on, whoever is most galled, has no right to take any Thing seriously. We give each other, if I may make Use of the Expression, only Challenges of Wit; and we must own ourselves overcome, if we make Use of any other Weapon, for the Glory of Wit is the Point of Honour now a days.

Yet we are surpris'd, that such Societies are not dis-united by Fear, Contempt, Indignation or Disquiet. We must hope, that by their Excess, they will at length,

turn Malice into Ridicule, and this is the only Means of destroying it. It is observed that cool Reasoning is the only Thing that imposes on them, and sometimes puts them out of Countenance.

We may imagine, that the Habit of offending makes those who have contracted it, incapable of bending to the Means necessary for acquiring a Fortune. But it is so far from it, that it is better to inspire Fear than Esteem. Besides Men of false Singularity, whether they are ill-tempered, mischievous, or Misanthropists, succeed perfectly well with those they have Occasion of; the Reputation they have acquired gives a very great Weight to the Attendance they pay; and they descend more easily than is imagined to base Flattery. Whoever is the Object of it, does not doubt but his Merit is unquestionable, whereas he forces such Characters to a Stile so foreign to them. Flat and exaggerated Adulation is the surest to please. An ingenious and delicate Praise does honour to him that gives it, and an extravagant Elogium pleases him that receives it. He takes the Exaggeration for the proper Expression, and thinks that great Truths cannot be told with Delicacy.

I must allow, that the Societies of which I speak, are rare; there is nothing but truly good Company that is more so, which is perhaps, nothing else but a fine Chimera, to which we approach more or less. It is not unlike a dispersed Republick, whose Members are found in every Order, and it is very hard to re-unite them into one Body. However, there is no one but claims a Title to it, in his own Society: I mean that every Body believes it can be found in an Order superior to his own, but never in an inferior Class. The first Magistrates suppose it as well at Court as amongst themselves; but do not believe it can descend so low as certain Citizens, who in their Turn, have Degrees of Pride.

A Courtier without entering into any Composition on this Head, firmly believes that good Company exists only amongst People of his own Rank. It is true indeed, that supposing equal Wit, Courtiers have an Advantage over the Generality of Men, by expressing their Thoughts in better Terms, and in a more agreeable Manner. A Fool at Court talks Nonsense more elegantly than one in the City. It is a Mark of Wit or at least of Education,
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in an obscure Man, to express himself properly. But in a Courtier it is necessary; he makes Use of no vulgar Expressions, because he knows none. A Courtier that talks in a low Strain, appears to me to have almost the Merit of a learned Man in foreign Languages. All Talents depend really on our natural Faculties, especially on the Use that is made of them. The Talent of Speech, or rather of Conversation, should be more perfect at Court than elsewhere, whereas we are forced to speak there, and obliged to say nothing: Thus our Phrases are multiplied, and our Ideas retrenched. I have no need, I imagine, to advertise, that I speak only of idle Courtiers, to whom *Versailles* is necessary, and who are useless to it.

It follows from what I have said, that Men of Wit at Court, when they possess the valuable Qualities of the Heart, are those, whose Acquaintance is most amiable; but such Societies are rare. Play serves to ease the genteel Part of the World of the painful Load of Existence; and the Talents which they call sometimes to their Succour, in seeking Pleasure, prove a Void in their Souls, but do not fill

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it. Such Remedies are useless to those whom their Taste, Confidence and Liberty unite.

The modish Part of the World would doubtless be surpris'd, if certain Societies of Burghers were preferred to theirs, where if we find not a delicate Pleasure, we find at least a catching Joy, mixed often with a little Rudeness; but it is very happy, that a greater Knowledge of the World has not crept in amongst them, which would serve only to make them more ridiculous, nor would they, if it had, be sensible of it; they have the Happiness to know no other Ridicule, but what is contrary to Reason and good Manners.

As to what regards Societies, if we prescind from some Difference in Expressions, we shall find that the general Class of the polite World, and that of the middle Sort, resemble each other more at bottom than we suppose. We find amongst them the same Broils, the same Void, and Misery. Littleness depends less on Objects than on those who perceive them. As for habitual Converse, Men of the polite World, generally

nerally speaking, are neither better nor worse than those of a lower Order. These last neither gain nor lose any thing by imitating them. Excepting the Vulgar, whose Ideas are only relative to their Wants, and who are for the most Part, deprived of them, on other Occasions, the rest of Mankind is every where the same. Good Company is independant of State and Rank, and is only found amongst those, who think and feel, who have just Ideas, and becoming Sentiments.



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C H A P. VIII.

On Ridiculousness, Singularity and Affectation.

Ridiculousness is like those Phantoms which have no Existence, but for such as believe in them. The more an abstracted Word is in Use, the less the Idea of it is fixed; because every one stretches, restrains, or changes it as he thinks proper; and the Difference of Principles is only perceived by that of Consequences, or by the different Applications which are made of them. If we had a Mind to define the Words we understand the least, we should define those we make the most Use of.

Ridiculousness consists in clashing with received Customs or Opinions, which are commonly confounded with Reason; yet what is contrary to Reason is Folly, and if it be contrary to Equity, it is a Crime.

A P. Ridiculousness should not therefore take Place in Things which are indifferent in them.

themselves, and depend only upon Fashion. Dress, Language, Manners, and Carriage are its Province; but it extends its Usurpation to Virtue, and this is the surest Means Envy makes use of, to stain its Lustre. Ridiculousness is superiour to Calumny, which can destroy itself, by falling back on its Author. Clear-sighted Malice does not rely upon the Deformity of Vice; it does it the Honour to treat it as Virtue, and associates Ridiculousness to it, the better to cry it down. Thus it becomes less odious, and more despised. Ridiculousness is become the Poison of Virtue and Talents, and sometimes the Punishment of Vice.

It is the Scourge of Men in the polite World, and it is but just, they should have a fantastick Being for a Tyrant. We sacrifice our Lives to our Honour, our Honour often to our Fortune, and our Fortune sometimes to the Fear of Ridiculousness.

I am not surprized, that some Care is taken to avoid our being expos'd to it; whereas it is of so great Importance in the Minds of a great many of those, with whom we are obliged to live. But the ex-

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extreme Sensibility of some reasonable Men in this Point, ought not to be excused. This excessive Fear has raised Swarms of little Judges of Ridicule, who determine whatever ridiculous Custom is in Vogue, as Tirewomen fix the Modes that are in Fashion. Had they not arrogated the Employment of distributing Ridicule, they would be themselves loaded with it; they are like those Criminals, who make themselves Hangmen, in order to save their Lives.

The greatest Folly of these frivolous Beings, and that they suspect themselves the least of, is, that they imagine their Empire is universal: If they knew what narrow Bounds it has, they would, through Shame, abandon it. The Vulgar do not know its Name, which is all the middling Sort of People understand of it. Amongst the Men of the World, those who are taken up with Affairs take notice, only through Detraction, of this troublesome little Set of Men, who deal in Ridicule; those even who have had a Share in it, and whom Reason or Age have withdrawn from it, scarce remember it; and illustrious Men are in too exalted a Station to give any At-

Attention to it, did they not deign sometimes to amuse themselves with it.

Though the Empire of Ridiculoufness is not as far extended, as those who maintain it suppose, still it spreads too far amongst the Men of the World; and it is surprizing that Characters so airy as ours, should submit to such Slavery, whose first Effect makes our Communication with each other uniform, languishing and tiresome.

The childish Fear of Ridiculoufness stifles our Ideas, contracts our Minds, and forms them on one Model; it suggests a Sameness in our Discourses, which are insignificant in their Nature, and tiresome by their Repetition. It seems that the same Spring gives an equal Motion to different Machines, in the same Direction. I see none but Fools that gain by this unaccountable Behaviour, which puts them on a Level with Men of superior Talents, infomuch as they are all equally confined to a common Measure, to which the meanest Understandings can attain.

Our Wit is almost equal, when we are tied down to the same Rules; and these Rules are necessary for those who can shew

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no Wit without them. They are like Liveries given to Footmen, who have no Clothes of their own.

With these fashionable Rules, one can be a Fool with Impunity; and a Man of a great deal of Wit will be regarded as such, unless he is Master of them: For there is nothing that is less distinguished from Absurdity, than the Ignorance of some trifling Customs. How many Blushes have been caused at Court, for producing a Man with Confidence, who was admired elsewhere, and introduced with an imprudent Pre-
sumption; yet his Introducers were not deceived, but they formed their Judgment of him according to Reason, and he is confronted with Modes.

It is not enough not to expose ourselves to Ridiculoufness, in order to get clear of it. Those who deserve it the least, have their share of it, and often the most respectable persons, if they are timorous enough to receive it. Some despicable, but bold and daring Men, who understand the ruling Modes, repel and annihilate it better than others.

As it often happens that Ridicule has determined Object, and then has no

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Existence but in Opinion, it depends partly on the Disposition of him, for whom it is intended, and in this Case it has Need of his Acceptance. It is made to miscarry, not by repelling it with Force, but by receiving it with Contempt or Indifference, and sometimes with a good Grace; for it is like the Arrows of the *Mexicans*, which pierce Iron, and are deadened against Armour of Wool.

When Ridicule is most deserved, there is also an Art to render it ineffectual; it consists in amplifying what has given Room to it. We humble our Adversary by despising the Strokes he would feign strike.

Besides this Boldness in resisting Ridicule imposes upon Men; who for the most Part, are incapable of esteeming Things but by what they appear to be worth; where their Contempt ceases, their Admiration begins, and Singularity is commonly the Object of it.

By what Address does it happen, that the same Thing in a certain Degree, causes Ridicule, and when it is carried to Excess, acquires a Sort of Lustre? Such is the Ef-

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fect of characterized Singularity, whether its Principles be laudable or reprehensible.

This can rise only from the Disgust caused by the Uniformity of Character we find in Society. We are so tired of meeting the same Ideas, the same Opinions, the same Behaviour, and of hearing the same Discourses, that we are infinitely obliged to him, who rises out of this lethargick Form.

Singularity is not precisely a Character; it is a simple Manner of Being, that unites itself to every Character, and consists in being ourselves, without our perceiving that we are different from others; for when we find it out, Singularity vanishes; it is a Riddle that ceases to be so, as soon as the Word it signifies is known. When we perceive that we differ from others, and that this Difference does not lie in Merit, we can scarce persist but in the Affectation of it, and then it is Meanness or Pride, which come to the same Thing, and produce Disgust; whereas natural Singularity raises the Relish of Society, and enlivens its Languor.

Fools,

Fools, who often know what they want, and imagine it is for their not taking Care to acquire it, see the Success of Singularity, make themselves singular, and we can easily imagine, what an Effect this odd Undertaking must produce.

Instead of contenting themselves with being nothing, which suits them so well, they endeavour at all Rates, to become something, and thus make themselves insupportable. Having observed, or rather heard it said, that Men of superior Genius are not always exempt from a little Dash of Folly, they endeavour to invent new Degrees of Folly, and fall into Absurdities.

False Singularity is only a Privation of Character, which consists not only in avoiding to be what others are, but also in endeavouring to be precisely what they are not.

We see some Societies where Characters are distributed as Parts in a Play. One Man makes himself a Philosopher, another a Droll, a third a Man of Humour. Such a one makes himself insolent, who
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before was inclined to be complaisant, but he found this Part was taken up by another. When one is nothing, he has it in his Choice to be any thing he will.

It is not surprising that these cross Purposes fill a Coxcomb's Head; but we are amazed to find them in Men of Wit. They are observable in those, who born with more Vanity than Pride, believe they dignify their Faults with Singularity, by magnifying them rather than by taking Pains to correct themselves of them. They abuse their own Character, study Nature in order to swerve the more from it, and form a peculiar Nature for themselves. They neither do or say any Thing but in a Manner contrary to Simplicity, and unhappily, when they seek what is extraordinary, they find nothing but what is flat and insipid. Men of Wit themselves are never less so than when they aim at it.

We should be sensible, that when we seek what is natural we never find it; that Efforts produce Excess, and that Excess discovers the Falshood of our Character. When we act in the Character of a blunt Man, we become fierce; in that of a
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lively Man, petulant and hair-brained; Goodness acted in this Manner degenerates into constrained Politeness, and betrays itself at length by Peevishness: False Sincerity is offensive; and though it should be carried on for some Time, as it consists only in transient Acts, yet we never can attain to Candour, which is the Principle of it, and consists in a Continuity of Character. It is like Probity; a great many Acts conformable to it do not make a Demonstration of it, and one Act contrary to it destroys it.

In fine, every Sort of Affectation is unmasked at the End, and then we fall below our real Value. Such a one is looked upon as a Fool, perhaps for having been before taken for a Man of Genius. We do not revenge ourselves by the half, for having been deceived.

Let us be therefore what we really are; let us add nothing to our Character; let us only endeavour to retrench what may be troublesome to others and dangerous for ourselves. Let us have Courage to withdraw ourselves from the Slavery of Modes without exceeding the Bounds of Reason.

CH A P

C H A P. IX.

On Men of Fortune.

THERE are two Sorts of Conditions which have a nearer Relation with Society, particularly with Men of the World, than they had formerly; that is to say, Men of Learning and Men of Fortune; but this should be understood only of the most distinguished amongst them. Learned Men signalize themselves by their Reputation and personal Accomplishments; and Men of Fortune by their Ostentation and Wealth. For in every State there are chief Men, a middle Order, and the People.

It is not very long ago since the Receivers of the King's Revenues looked upon Men of Family, as their Protectors, who sometimes were their Masters. The most Part of the Fortunes acquired by the Finances in the last Age, were not gained honestly enough to be boasted of; for this Reason, they became more considerable; the first Profits gave Rise to their Avarice; Avarice encreased their Greediness,

ness, and these Passions are Enemies to Ostentation. An Habit of Oeconomy scarce ever slackens, and is sufficient by itself, without a Genius or distinguished good Luck, to raise a moderate Fortune, by continual Labour, to immense Sums.

If there happened to be at this Time, amongst these Men of Business, some wise enough to enjoy their Fortunes, they judiciously kept within the Bounds of Conveniencies, Pleasures and the Advantages of dumb Riches: They avoided making a Figure which could only excite the Envy of great Men, and the Hatred of the People. If we contented ourselves with what really pleases, we should pass for modest Men.

Those to whom Riches give nothing else but Pride, as they have no other Thing to boast of, have at all Times, loved to make a Show with their Fortune; too drunk with the Enjoyment of it, to blush at the Means they made Use of, their Pomp was formerly the Height of Folly, bad Taste and Indecency.

This Ostentation of Riches is more commonly the Madness of new Men, whom

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one Turn of Fortune has suddenly enriched, than of those who have been raised by Degrees. It is an odd Thing enough, that Men place more Vanity in their good Luck than in their Labours. Those who owe their All to their Industry, know how often they have avoided, repaired, and were guilty of Faults: As they cannot boast of the Beginning of their Fortune, they enjoy it with Precaution; whereas others who find themselves suddenly made Beings so different from themselves, think they are Objects worthy of the particular Attention of Chance. They do not know what to attribute it to, and not being able to find out the Reason, they always interpret it to their own Advantage.

Such are the Fortunes, which can be called ridiculous, and were more so formerly than at present, by the Contrast of the Person and of Pageantry misplaced.

Besides, Fortunes gained in the Finances were then little more than a Lottery; but now they are become an Art which has its Method and Principles, like others, or at least a Game mixed with Address and Hazard. We could almost assign the Profits by the Nature of the Affair.

Why should the Finances be contemned? The State ought to have Revenues; it is necessary to charge some People with the Receipt of them, and just they should find their Profit in it, provided their Perquisites are limited; otherwise they become scandalous.

We should cry out only against the Male Administration and Insolence of those who cheat, and punish them in a publick and severe Manner. Thus we ought, in all Stations, to sacrifice those to publick Vengeance, who make us hate Authority by the ill Use they make of it, and who in making Men unhappy by their Excess, corrupt them by their Example.

It must be confessed, they should attribute the Discredit they are as yet in, less to Oppression than to the Insolence of some amongst them. Can we believe, they are cried down, on Account of the Injustice done to some obscure People, whose Complaints are stifled, whose Misfortunes are not known, and who meet with no Protection from such as exclaim in so indeterminate a Manner against Injustice, even when they know them? It is not

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Generosity or Justice, that reclaim when we inveigh against these rich Folks, it is Envy that pursues Pageantry.

This ought to inspire rich Men, who were not born to be so, with a reasoned Modesty. They do not rightly conceive what need those even who are most worthy of their Fortune, have also of Art to make it pardonable in them.

Men unhappily are fond of posting up their Happiness; they ought notwithstanding, to perceive that it is very different from Glory, the Publickness of which makes and augments its Existence. Unhappy Men are humbled enough even by the Lustre of Prosperity, must they also be insulted with the Affectation of it?

I am not surpris'd that the People murmur at great Fortunes, which they furnish the Substance of, without ever partaking of them. But Men of Family should esteem them as Estates entailed upon them, and destined as a Compensation for a Patrimony they have perhaps squandered away, without any Advantage to the State. There are but few Fortunes that do not fall to some distinguished Families.

A Man of Quality sells a Name which he had not the Trouble to illustrate; and if it had not been for the Traffick that is established between Pride and Necessity, most Part of our noble Families would fall into Obscurity, and by Consequence into Misery. There are many Examples of it in the Provinces. If the Rich were allied only to each other, they must necessarily by the Power of Riches, attain to the Dignities they preserve in other Families: They perhaps will one Time or other make Use of this Secret, unless Courtiers enter into Business. A little Raillery can allay and a great deal of Money dissipate whatever Scruples the first may have, who dare break through this Prepossession.

However, Men of Family have already lost the Right they had of despising these new raised Men, inasmuch as they are, for the most Part, related to them.

It was formerly an Act of Goodness not to humble these Receivers; now they are allied to the greatest Families, they cannot be despised by them without Injustice and Folly. There are some Men of Quality who have not married below themselves, because Men of Fortune did not esteem them

them enough, to aspire at an Alliance with them.

All those whose Vanity rises from their Birth are not always worthy to be married below their Quality. It is not every one that has a Right to sell his Name.

If Reasons of Decorum do not repress the Haughtiness of Men of Family with Regard to these Receivers, at least those of Interest keep them within Bounds.

By bantering them in their Absence, they shew more Envy against their Fortune than Contempt of their Persons ; whereas in their Presence, so much Regard, Distinction and Praises are lavishly paid them. Men of Family flatter themselves that this Conduct can be deemed a Mark of such unquestionable Superiority, that it can grow sociable without any Risque : But no one is Ignorant of the true Motives. Sometimes they permit themselves some little moderate Fits of bad Humour ; which Conduct flatters their Inferiors by so much the more, as it resembles the genuine Behaviour of Equality. Those who act this Part, wish, that the disinterested Spectators took it for Haughtiness ; but it is

not possible, because if their Proceedings seem to produce an Effect contrary to that they wish for, they soften their Temper by Degrees, and take the lowest Methods to bring back a Man ready to be scared. A Sort of Raillery helps them out of their Perplexity, which covers a great deal of Baseness.

If rich Men in fine, think themselves superior to others, are they so much to be blamed for it? Have we not the same Regard, nay the same Respect for them, as for those who are in Places, where it is our Duty to pay them? Men can only judge by outward Appearances; are they therefore ridiculously mistaken, because those who deceive them are basely and artfully perfidious?

There are but few rich Men, what Wit soever or generous Souls they may have, to whom their Riches do not, at certain Times, give some Fits of imperious Humour, and who at other Times, are not mortified at being only rich, or at being regarded only as such.

Yet they are more useful to Society than they were before, and they acquire a
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real Superiority over those, to whom they are serviceable. True Inferiors are those who receive, and Humiliation is added to it, when the Services are pecuniary. This is what has with Justice placed Beggars below Slaves; these are in a State of Humiliation, and the others in a State of Abjection. Wherefore those who cringe to Men employed in the Finances are in the Category of Beggars, and more so, when they receive Favours from them, if they pay them with Ingratitude: Then their Meanness has no longer a Name, and augments in Proportion to the Birth and Elevation of the Ungrateful.

Why are we surpris'd at the Regard which Riches inspire? It is certain, that they do not constitute real Merit; but they are the Means of all Conveniencies, of all Pleasures and sometimes of Merit itself. Every Thing that contributes or is thought to contribute to Happiness is always cherished by Men. It is difficult not to identify rich Men and Riches. Do not exterior Decorations cause the same Illusion?

If we have a Mind by a philosophical Examen to strip a Man of all the Luf-

tre that is foreign to him, Reason has a Right to do it; but I see that Humour makes Use of this Privilege oftener than Philosophy.

Besides, why should we not esteem what represents all that we regard? This is what Riches precisely do amongst us; there is no Difference but from the Cause to the Effect. The only respectable Thing which Riches cannot give, is an illustrious Birth; but if it be not supported by Places, Dignities and Power, if in short, it be by itself, it is eclipsed by all that Gold can procure. If we are desirous to have a Right to despise Riches, we must change our Manners.

There were Times and Places in which Gold was despised, and Merit solely honoured. *Sparta* and *Rome* in its Beginning, furnish us with Examples of it. But if we attend never so little to the Constitution and Spirit of these Republicks, we must conceive, that Gold must have been of no Value amongst them, as it was representative of nothing. They had no Notion of Conveniencies; real Wants do not give us an Idea of those we know; their Imagination was not as yet exercised on Pleasures,
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those of Nature sufficed; and the greatest Pleasures of this Kind cost but little. Luxury was shameful, so that Gold was useless and despised. This Contempt of it was at the same Time, the Principle and Effect of Moderation and Austerity. The most painful Manner of Living ceases to be troublesome, as soon as it becomes honourable. To noble Souls, great Sacrifices are not always as cruel as they appear to be to vulgar Souls. A certain Sentiment of Fierceness and of Esteem for one's self, raises the Soul and makes it capable of every Thing. Pride is the first of Tyrants or of Comforters.

Such was *Lacedemonia*, such was *Rome* in its Childhood; but as soon as Vice and Pleasures made their Way, all Things, even those which should have been the Præmiums of Virtue, all Things, I say, became venal; Gold therefore was sought after, was necessary, was esteemed and honoured: This is precisely the State, to which we are brought, by our Knowledge, our Taste, our new Wants, our Pleasures, and far-fetched Conveniencies. Though the antient Manners of *Rome* and *Sparta* were revived, perhaps they could not
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make us more or less happy; but Gold, in this Case, would be useless.

Men have but one determined Propensity, which is their Interest; if it be attached to Virtue, they are virtuous with Ease; but if its Object changes, the Disciple of Virtue becomes the Slave of Vice without changing his Character: The same Colours serve to paint Beauties and Monsters.

The Manners of a People are the active Principle of their Conduct, the Laws are only a Curb to it; they have not therefore the same Empire over them that Manners have. We follow the Manners of our Age, but we obey the Laws: It is Authority that makes and abrogates them. The Manners of a Nation are more dear and sacred to it than its Laws. As it knows not their Author, it looks upon them as its own Work, and takes them always for Reason.

Yet we cannot conceive, with what Facility a Prince could change the most depraved Manners of certain Nations and direct them towards Virtue, provided this Project was not published. Such a Revolution would appear to be the Master-piece

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of Enterprizes; and would be more so by its Effect than by its Difficulty. In Expectation of such a Change, whilst Things are on the present Footing, let us not be surpris'd that Riches procure Consideration. This is shameful, if you will, but it must be so; for Men are more Consequent in their Manners than in their Judgments.

We comprehend commonly in the World amongst the Receivers we mentioned, another Class of rich Men, who pretend with Reason to be distinguished by it. These are Merchants, valuable Men, and useful to the State, who enrich themselves but by procuring Plenty, exciting honourable Industry, and whose Riches prove their Services. They are not met with in Society as frequently as the others, because their Business takes them up, and does not allow them to lose their Time for frivolous Amusements, which are liked as much through Habit as Idleness; and which under the Name of Pleasures, cause Uneasiness as often as they dissipate it.

Though the Finances are carried on in much the same Manner as Trade, yet they are sooner learned and cleared up; the whole

whole Art of Knaves consists in embroiling them. The Science of Trade is less complicated and more combined, less obscure but more extensive, and encreases still more in Perfection. Application to Principles requires a constant Attention; new Accidents require new Measures; the Pains attending Trade are almost continual; whereas the Finances are more limited in themselves, and like a Machine which does not often want the Workman's Hand when it is once put in Motion; they are like a Pendulum which is but seldom wound up.

All the Prejudices arising from our State of Life are not equally false; the Esteem which Merchants have for theirs is agreeable to Reason, they make no Attempt and receive no Advantage but what the Publick partakes of; every thing authorises them to esteem their Profession. Merchants are the first Spring of Plenty, and the most Part of Receivers are only Channels fit for the Circulation of Money. Though these Channels should be of Brass or Clay, the Matter of which they are composed is indifferent, so their Use be the same.

Merchants do themselves Honour by the Means they make Use of to acquire Riches.

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The others tend to the same End by the Use they make of their Wealth: This is what has engaged them to produce themselves in the World, where they would have been the only Strangers, if, almost at the same Time, Men of Learning had not been admitted into it.



CHAP.

C H A P. X.

On Men of Letters.

FOrmerly Men of Letters were quite taken up with Study, separated from the World, and in writing for their Contemporaries, thought only of Posterity. Their Manners full of Candour and Rusticity had scarce any Relation with those of Society; and the Men of the World less instructed than they are now a days, admired their Works, or rather the Names of the Authors, and did not think themselves worthy of living with them. But the Distance they kept at was occasioned more out of Consideration than Repugnance.

A Taste for Letters, Sciences and Arts has prevailed insensibly, and is come to such a Degree, that those who have it not by Inclination affect it through Fashion. Those therefore who cultivate them were sought for, and have been drawn into the World in Proportion to the Pleasure which was found in their Conversation.

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They have gained on both Sides by this Union. The Men of the World have cultivated their Minds, formed their Taste and acquired new Pleasures. Nor have the Men of Letters received less Advantages by it. They have found Protection and Consideration; they have perfected their Taste, polished their Wit, softened their Manners, and acquired Lights in a great many Points, which they could not have drawn from their Books.

Learning does not precisely give a State in Life, but serves in the Place of it to those who have no other; and procures them Distinctions which Men superior to them in Rank cannot always obtain. We do not think it humbles us more to pay Homage to Wit than to Beauty, unless we are in other Respects, in Competition for Rank or Dignity: In such Cases Wit can become the most sanguine Object of Rivality. But when we have an undoubted Superiority of Rank, we receive Wit with Complaisance, and are glad to give a Man of an inferior Order the Prize which we should have disputed with a Rival on other Occasions.

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Wit has this Advantage, that those who esteem it prove their own Title to it, or make us believe so; which is much the same Thing for a great many People.

The Republick of Letters is divided into a great many Classes. Learned Men who are also called Men of Erudition, had formerly great Respect paid them; to them the Renewal of Learning is owing; but as at present, they are not esteemed as much as they deserve, their Number diminishes too much, and it is a Misfortune for Learning: They appear but seldom in the World, which is not at all agreeable to them, nor are they more so to it.

There is another Order of learned Men who are employed in exact Sciences. We esteem them, we know how useful they are and recompence them sometimes; yet their Names are more in Fashion than their Persons, unless they make themselves agreeable by some other Things besides the Merit which causes their Reputation.

Men of Letters the most sought for, are those whom we commonly call fine Wits, amongst whom there is also a Distinction

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to be made. Those whose Talents are distinguished and crowned with Success are soon known and well received ; but if their Wit is shut up within the Sphere of Talents, whatever Genius they may be judged to have, the Work is applauded and the Author neglected ; another in Society is preferred to him, whose Wit is more varied, of a less determined Application, and more extensive.

The first do more Honour to their Age, but we seek in Society what pleases us most. Besides there is a Compensation for every Thing. Great Talents do not always suppose a great Depth of Wit: A small Volume of Water can furnish a brighter Spout than a Brook, whose smooth, equal and abundant Course enriches a profitable Land. Men of Talents ought to have the greatest Reputation, this is their Recompence. Men of Wit ought to find the greatest Pleasure in Conversation, because they afford the most to it ; this is an Acknowledgement founded on Justice. Talents are not communicated by frequenting those who possess them. With Men of Wit we open our Mind, enlarge our Views, and owe them a Part of our own. Wherefore the Pleasure and Custom of living with them cause Intimacy,

macy, and sometimes Friendship, when the Qualities of the Heart are met with, in spight of any Disproportion of State. For we must own in spight of the Madnes of fashionable Wit, that Men of Literature whose Minds are known to be upright, are looked upon in the World, quite in another Light from those whose Talents are praised, but whose Persons are disowned.

It is said, that *Play and Love make all Conditions equal*: I am sure Wit would have been added, if this Proverb had been made since Wit is become a Passion. Play equals only by lessening the Superior; Love by raising the Inferior, and Wit, because true Equality comes from that of our Souls. It were to be wished, that Virtue had produced the same Effect, but it belongs only to the Passions, to oblige Men to be nothing else but Men; that is to say, to renounce all exterior Distinctions.

Courtiers are those whose Learning deserves the most to be praised. If I was to give a Man Advice, who cannot make his Way in the World but by his Wit, I would tell him: "Prefer above all Things the Friendship of your Equals; it is the surest, the most becoming and often the most

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 " Ties of Society, do it at Court, these
 " are the most agreeable and least trou-
 " ble some." Art, Intrigues, Snares, and
 what some call black Practices are only
 made use of by Rivals in Ambition.
 Courtiers do not think of offending those
 who do not cross them in their Designs,
 and often take Pride in obliging them.
 They like to see Men of Merit devoted to
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 is inclined to keep too remarkable a Dis-
 tance. Self-Love when it is clear-sighted
 differs very little from Modesty in its Ef-
 fects. A Man of Learning who is worthy
 of Esteem, will suffer nothing from offen-
 sive Pride, which he might be exposed to
 with Men who have no other Superiority
 over him, but what their Impertinence
 supposes, and who believe it is a Means
 of proving it to him.

Since fine Wit is become a Contagion,
 some Men set up for being Protectors, who
 stand themselves in Need of Protection,
 and to whom nothing is wanting for this
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Purpose, but to be worthy of it. A great many of them should be sensible, that it is honourable enough for them to be useful to Learning, for they receive more Consideration from it than they could procure themselves by it.

Others, who imagine themselves to be Part of the polite World, because it is not known by what Means they got into it, appear astonished that Men of Learning are admitted, who in their Turn have more Reason to be surprized how such common Fellows are received, who in Spight of their Complaisance for great Men and their Impertinence with their Equals, will be always reckoned useless Members. How many false Men of the World are there! But at least, a Difference should be made between those who are well received and those who force themselves into it, in Spight of the Dislike they experience.

Let us, in Effect, reduce Things to their true Standard. We are Men of the World by Birth and Dignities; we are attached to it by Interest, and introduced into it by Meanings; we are tied down in it by particular Circumstances, such as Alliances with Men

of Fortune ; in fine, we are admitted into it by Choice ; this falls to the Share of lettered Men, and Taste necessarily draws Distinctions after it.

Men of Fortune who have Wit and Learning are so convinced of it, that if we consult them or observe their Conduct, we shall find that they enjoy their Fortune, but value themselves in other Respects. They are even offended at the Praises given to their Grandeur, because they are sensible they have another Kind of Merit. We pride ourselves in what we esteem the most. They seek Men of Literature, and do themselves Honour by their Friendship for them.

The Success of some learned Men has led a great many others astray. They all have flattered themselves with the same Advantages, and many of them were deceived ; whether it be, that they had less Merit, or whether their Merit was less communicative.

A great many young Men have imagined they followed their Genius, and their bad success has made them incapable of entering into another Carreer, wherein they
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could have succeeded if they begun in Time. By this Means the State has lost many good Subjects, and the Republick of Letters has gained nothing by them.

Though the Advantages which Learning procures, are generally reduced to some Pleasures in Society, they however excite Envy. Fools are almost all Enemies by their State to Men of Wit. Wit is not often very profitable to him who is endowed with it; and still there is no Quality that is so much exposed to Jealousy.

We are surprized that it is allowed us to make an Elogium of our Heart, and that nothing is so unbecoming and so strictly forbid us as to praise our Wit; the Vanity which arises from the latter is by so much the less pardoned, as it is well grounded. From hence this Conclusion has been drawn, that Men esteem Wit more than they do Virtue. Is there also no other Reason for it?

We do not methinks, love what we are obliged to admire. We admire only by Force and by Surprize. Reflection endeavours to prescribe against Admiration, and when it is forced to subscribe to it, it is joined

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One Word often contains a Collection of Ideas ; such are the Terms of Wit and of the Heart. If a Man makes us understand that he has Wit, and which is more, that he has Reason to believe it, it is the same Thing as if he had forewarned us, that we cannot impose upon him with false Virtues ; that we cannot conceal our Faults from him, that he sees us such as we are and will judge us with Justice. Such a Declaration is already like an Act of Hostility. Whereas the Man who talks to us of the Goodness of his Heart and persuades us of it, lets us know, that we can depend upon his Indulgence, even on his Blindness, on his Services, and that we can be unjust towards him with Impunity.

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those Liquors which by their Mixture incorporate with the Flavour of others. Vicious Men employ it to gratify their Passions. But how often has Wit guided, maintained, adorned, unfolded and strengthened Virtue? Wit alone by understanding well its Interest, has produced as laudable Actions as Virtue itself could have done. Thus Folly alone has perhaps been guilty, or the Occasion of as many Crimes as Vice.

As for Men of Wit who are properly called so, that is to say, who are known by their Talents, or by their distinguished Taste for Sciences and Letters, we know them but little, if we dread their Competition or Intrigues in the Ways that lead to Fortune or Ambition. The most Part of them are incapable of it, and those who by Chance meddle in it, are at the End commonly deceived. Professed Sharpers know them so well that when they engage them in any delicate Affairs, they endeavour to deceive them the first, then make them serve as Instruments, and take special Care not to trust them with the principal Spring. On the other Hand, there are Fools who with an Ardour that never slackens, closely pursue their Designs without

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out losing Sight of their Object, and attain to all they desire.

The Love of Learning makes us insensible to Avarice and Ambition, consoles us in many of our Wants, and often hinders our knowing or feeling them. With such Dispositions Men of Wit ought when every Thing is considered, to be better than other Men. It happens also that Wit inspires those who are endowed with it with a secret Satisfaction, that helps to make them agreeable to others, to seduce themselves and renders them unfit for making a Fortune, and happily very indifferent in this Point.

Men of Wit should by so much the more despise the low Jealousy they excite, as they never live more agreeably than amongst themselves. They ought to know by Experience, how necessary they are to each other. When any Pique separates them, Fools soon reconcile them again, by the Impossibility they find of living continually with them.

Their foreign Enemies could do them but little Harm, if they were not imprudent enough to furnish them with Means

to be cried down, by doing sometimes ill Offices to themselves.

I could wish for the Honour of Learning and the Happiness of those who cultivate it, that they were persuaded of a Truth which ought to be the fixed Principle of their Conduct. It is, that they can dishonour themselves by the injurious Things they do, say, or write against their Rivals; that the most they can do, is to mortify them without making Enemies of them, and engaging them to make as shameful Reprisals. But that it is not allowed them to tarnish a Reputation consigned to the Publick. We raise and destroy only our own Reputation, and we do it always by ourselves. Jealousy ever proves an Inferiority in him that feels it. Whatever Superiority we may have over a Rival in other Regards, as soon as we conceive any Jealousy against him, we must be inferior to him in some Shape.

There is no particular Man, however elevated or illustrious he may be, no Society, be it never so shining, that can determine the Judgment of the Publick, although a Faction can by chance procure Success, or occasion a short-lived Distaste.

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This even would be more difficult at present than it was in the last Age, because the Publick was then less instructed, nor did it set up so much to be a Judge. Now it amuses itself with literary Scenes, and personally despises those who act in them with Indecency; nor does it in the least, change the Opinion it has formed of their Works.

It is useless to prove to Men of Letters, that Rivality when it produces other Effects besides Emulation is shameful, this has no Need of being proved; but they should be sensible, that their Disunion is directly contrary to their general and particular Interest, yet they do not appear to perceive it.

Elaborate Works, judicious and severe but just and becoming Criticisms, where the Beauties are marked out in discovering the Faults to diversify the Object, are what we have a Right to expect from Men of Letters. Their Discussions should have no other Object but Truth, an Object which never caused Animosity or Ill-nature, and which turns out to the Advantage of Humanity; whereas their Quarrels are as dangerous for themselves, as they are scandalous to wise Men.

Men. None but the Stupid who learn from Envy to feel their Inferiority, and who are too proud to own it, are pleased to see such Men humble each other, whom they would otherwise be obliged to respect. Thus Fools learn to hide their Hatred under an Air of Contempt, which they alone should be the Objects of. It seems, that now a days we do precisely the contrary of what was practised when Animals were made to fight in order to amuse Men.

Methinks, I see in the Republick of Letters a Set of Men whose Knowledge could make them formidable, yet they furnish Barbarians with Arms, and shew them how to make use of them.



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C H A P. XI.

On the Madness of fine Wit.

THERE is nothing, however useful it may be, but what can be abused, was it only by Excess. I do not therefore undertake to examine in what Degree Learning may be useful to a flourishing State and contribute to its Glory; but to know first, if our Taste for fine Wit be not too general, perhaps more than is necessary for its Perfection?

Secondly, to know from whence the Vanity proceeds we draw from it, and consequently, our extreme Sensibility on this Head? The Examination and Solution of these two Questions are necessarily founded on the same Reasons.

It is certain, that those who cultivate letters by their Profession, would receive but few Advantages from them, if other Men had not at least, a Taste for them. This is the only Means of procuring the recompence and Consideration for Learning which it has Need of, in order to sup-

port itself with Dignity. But when that Part of Literature which we commonly comprehend under the Name of fine Wit becomes a Mode, a Sort of publick Mad-ness, Men of Letters gain Nothing and other Professions lose by it. The Crowd of Pretenders to fine Wit makes us distinguish those less who have a Right to it, from others who have only Pretensions.

As for what regards those Men who are accountable to Society for different, serious and useful Professions, or even those of the first Necessity, which require all their Application when they are destined for them, such as War, Law, Trade, and the Arts; a moderate Knowledge and Taste for Letters would be doubtless, a great Resource for them. They find in them a Recreation, a Pleasure, a certain Exercise of the Mind, which is not useless to their other Functions. But if this Taste becomes too lively, and degenerates into Passion, it is impossible but real Duties must suffer by it. The first of all our Duties are those of our Profession, because our first Obligation is to be Patriots.

Letters have in themselves an Attractive that seduces the Mind makes other Occu

Occupations tiresome to it, and are the Cause why it neglects those that are most indispensable. We seldom see a Man in Love with fine Wit, that acquits himself well of another different Profession; I do not doubt, but there are Men engaged in Professions quite opposed to Letters, for which however, they had distinguished Talents. It were to be wished for the Good of Society, they had wholly applied themselves to them, for their Genius and State of Life being in Contradiction, they are good for Nothing.

These unexceptionable Talents, these signal Vocations are very rare; the greatest Part of Talents depends upon Circumstances, on the Application and Exercise that is made of them. Let us examine a little these pretended natural but uncultivated Talents.

We see some Men whose Idleness forms a Sort of State in Life. They make themselves Admirers of fine Wit, and cry themselves up for Men of Taste, this is their Advertisement; then they look out for Writings, eagerly give their Opinion, protect and believe sincerely, or endeavour to make others believe, that they have a Share

in the Works and in the Success of those whom they have pestered with their Advice.

However, they form for themselves by this Means a Sort of Existence and Reputation in Society. With whatever little Wit they shew, they remain in Inaction, and confine themselves prudently to the Right of judging peremptorily; they usurp in Opinion a Sort of Superiority over the Talents themselves, and are judged capable of doing whatever they have not done, for no other Reason, but for their having done nothing. When they are reproached with Idleness, they venture entering into the Career, they were before the Arbiters of. Their first Essay profits of the favourable Prepossession of their Society. It is praised, admired, and they cry out one to another, that the Publick should not be deprived of a Master-piece. Thus the modest Complaisance of the Author suffers itself to be violated, and consents to be published.

Then the Illusion vanishes, the Publick condemns, or takes little Notice of the Work; Admirers retract their Opinion, and the degraded Author learns by his own Experience, that there is no Profession

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but requires a Man's whole Time to itself. In reality, we see but few distinguished Works, or even Works of Taste which are not writ by professed Authors.

Bad Success does not always undeceive those it humbles. There is no Sort of Self-Love more sensible or more incorrigible than that which arises from fine Wit; it is infinitely of a more mistrustful Nature in those whose Profession it is not, than in true Authors; because we think it a greater Humiliation not to answer our Pretensions than our Duties. It is in vain for them to proclaim their Indifference, they deceive Nobody. Indifference is the only Disposition of the Soul which he that experiences it should be ignorant of; it does not exist when it is announced.

There are no Works but require Labour; the worst have often cost the most, and we take no Pains without some View. You have, you say, no other Reason but your Amusement: In this Case you must not get your Works printed, nor even read them to your Friends, inasmuch as you are desirous of consulting or amusing them. We ask no Advice about Things which do not concern us, nor do we pretend to amuse with

with those we have no Esteem for. Therefore this pretended Indifference is always false ; nothing but a very sensible Interest makes us act the Part of Indifference. It is a Precaution in case of bad Success, or the Ostentation of a Right which we are desirous to establish as unquestionable.

Never was fine Wit turned so much into Ridicule as since we are infatuated with it. Notwithstanding, our Weakness on this Head is such, that those who could acquire Glory otherwise, feed themselves on fine Wit, with Praises which they own the Falseness of. If you act with Sincerity towards them, you make them irreconcilable Enemies, they, who cry out with such Vehemence against Self-Love in professed Authors.

Let us examine what the Causes are of this excessive Self-Love : The following have affected me the most.

Among savage People it was always Strength that caused the Nobility and Distinction of Men ; but in well governed Nations, where Strength is subservient to the Laws which prevent or repress Violence,

the real and personal Distinction the most generally allowed of comes from Wit.

Strength cannot be amongst us a Distinction, or a Means for Fortune, it is at most an Advantage in painful Labours which are the Lot of the most unhappy Class of Mankind. But in Spight of the Subordination which the Laws, Policy, Wisdom or Pride could have established, there remains always for Wit in the most obscure Classes of Men, a Means which it can lay hold on for acquiring a Fortune and Elevation, and which Examples point out to it. For Want of the real Advantages which Wit can procure, according to the Application that is made of it, the least Step it makes towards Fortune, gains it a Sort of Esteem.

But how does it happen, that amongst all the Kinds of Wit that can be made use of, fine Wit is that which inspires the greatest Self-Love? On what is the Superiority founded? and what is it that favours so much our Pretensions to it? This is what causes the Illusion.

First, Men are never more jealous of their Advantages than when they look upon

upon them as personal, and imagine they owe them only to themselves; and as they judge less of Wit by its remote Effects which they do not perceive the Connexion of, than by its present and immediate Signs, such of them as are not accustomed to Reflection, believe they see this Prerogative in fine Wit more than in any other Kind. They judge that it properly belongs to him who is endowed with it. They see, or believe they see it comes from himself without any other Help; for they do not distinguish the Help he receives, which is notwithstanding very real. They do not reflect, that supposing equal Talents, the most distinguished Writers are always those who are fed with a well digested Reading of the most eminent Works on the same Subject. They do not see, I say, that the most fruitful Genius when it is reduced to its own Ideas, has not many of them; and that it is by the Knowledge and Comparison of foreign Ideas, we come to produce a Number of others which we may properly call our own.

Secondly, what still favours the advantageous Opinion we have of fine Wit, arises from the Parallel which we often have in our Power to make.

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We observe, that the Son of a Man of Wit and Talents often makes useless Efforts to trace his Father's Footsteps; though there is nothing less hereditary than Wit, still the Son of a learned Man can become learned himself, if he will. In Geometry and in all other true Sciences which have Principles, Rules and a Method we can rise, nay, we generally do rise, if not to Glory, at least to the Knowledge of our Predecessors.

Perhaps it will be said in Favour of certain Sciences, that their Use is more real and more generally allowed of than that of fine Wit, but this Objection is more favourable to these Sciences themselves than to those who profess them.

It is true, that whoever gives himself out for a Master of Sciences is obliged to be instructed in them to a certain Degree, otherwise he cannot impose grossly on himself, nor easily on others, if it be their Interest to inform themselves of it. Though the Sciences are not free from Quackery, yet it is more difficult to make use of it in them, than in what is purely relative to Wit. We deceive ourselves in good earnest

Earneſt in this Reſpect, and impoſe eaſily on others, eſpecially if we do not expoſe ourſelves by publiſhing our Works, and content ourſelves with the ſimple Title of Men of Wit and Taſte. This is what makes fine Wit ſo common that it ſhould not inſpire us with ſo much Vanity.

But let us paſs this Crowd of witty Men by. On what do Authors of Merit, of which they have given incontestable Proofs, eſtabliſh their Superiority with Regard to many other Professions ?

If we ſuppoſe that Wit ſhould be the only Measure of Eſteem, if we make no Account of the different Degrees of Uſefulneſs, and judge of Professions only by the Portion of Wit they require, how many are there that ſuppoſe as much and perhaps more Penetration, Sagacity and Quickneſs, greater Diſcuſſions and Compariſons, in a word, a more extenſive Knowledge than the moſt renowned Works of Taſte or Pleaſure ?

I ſhall not mention what regards the Government or Conduct of Armies; it may be imagined, that the Grandeur which attends certain Places has too
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strong an Influence on the Esteem we have for those who fill them with Success ; this would be too advantageous an Example for me. Neither shall I enter into a Detail of each different Employment ; there are more of them than we imagine, which have solid Titles to produce. Let us at least look over some of the Occupations in Society.

Should not a Magistrate who is worthy of his Place, have a just, exact, penetrating and exercised Wit, in order to arrive at Truth, through the Clouds with which Injustice and Cavilling endeavour to obscure it ; to pull off from Imposture the Mask of Innocence it wears ; to discern Innocence in Spight of the Confusion, Fear, or Aukwardness that seem to depose against it ; to distinguish the Confidence of an innocent from the Audaciousness of a guilty Man ; to know natural Equity and the positive Law equally well, and make them agree with and yield to each other according to the Interest of Society and consequently of Justice itself?

Should an Orator have less natural Endowments in order to propose and clear up an Affair on which the Judge is to pass Sentence ; to direct his Knowledge, and
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sometimes to furnish him with it? I do not speak of the criminal Art of leading Justice astray.

What Discernment, what Nicety of Discussion does not the Art of Criticism require?

What Strength of Genius must there not be to invent certain Systems, which perhaps are false, but serve equally to explain some Phenomena; to prove and reconcile some Facts, and find out new Truths?

What Sagacity do not the Sciences require to invent Methods which prove the Extent of the Inventer's Knowledge, and are so useful, that they guide even those with Certainty, who do not conceive the Principles of them?

However, there are a great many of these Philosophers who are scarce known; nor are there any renowned ones, but such as have caused Revolutions in our Minds whilst those who are only useful remain in Obscurity. Men are never so ungrateful for good Offices as when they enjoy them without Trouble.

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The Glory of fine Wit is felt and proclaimed by the Generality of Men, who are in some Degree, able to conceive the Ideas of it, but are incapable of producing them in the Form in which they are presented to them; hence their Admiration arises. Whereas Philosophers are only understood by Philosophers, and can pretend to no more than the Esteem of their Equals, which is enjoying a very limited Degree of it.

But why should we enter into a strict Detail of the Occupations which are judged to belong principally to Wit? There are a great many others not generally reckoned in this Class, which do not require a less Share of it.

Can it be doubted, for Example, but there is a great Extent of Knowledge required in order to fix a new Branch of Trade, or to perfect one already established?

We must acknowledge, without doubt, that Wit cannot be denied to those who have signalized themselves in the different Careers I was speaking of; but it will be said,

said, that there is no Need of a great Share of it to pursue them faintly. It is sufficient to answer this Distinction with another of the like Nature, and to ask what Account is made of those who creep in Literature, they are treated with Injustice and esteemed less than they deserve.

Another specious but weak Objection is made. It is observed, that a great many Men have acquired a Reputation in Arts and certain Sciences, though they were incapable of all the other Things to which they unprofitably applied themselves, and far from being in a Condition to produce the least Work of Taste or Pleasure, they were scarce able to attain to the common Cant of Conversation. Hence we think we have a Right to look upon them as a Sort of Machines whose Springs have only one determined Effect.

But can we believe, that all those who have distinguished themselves by fine Wits were equally capable of all the other Productions and different Employments of Society? They never perhaps could be made good Magistrates, good Merchants or Artists. Are they very sure they were fit for these Employments? What they took

took for a Repugnance to certain Occupations, might have been as much a Sign of Incapacity as of Dislike. Are there no Examples of remarkably fine Wits who are ignorant enough in other Respects, even in those that seem to have the nearest Relation with Wit, such is the simple Talent of Conversation, for it is a Talent as well as others? We could certainly find Examples of it, and it would be wrong to be surprized at it.

To prove that Universality of Talents is a Chimæra, I will not look out for Examples in the common Class of Wits; let us rise to the Sphere of these rare Genius's who in doing Honour to Humanity, humble such Men as are set in Competition with them. *Newton* who has found out the System of the Universe, at least for a Time, was not looked upon as capable of every Thing, even by those who counted it an Honour to be his Countrymen.

William III. who was a good Judge of Men, being at a Loss in a politick Affair, was advised to consult *Newton*. *Newton*, said he, is only a great Philosopher. This Title was doubtless an uncommon Praise; but in this Occasion *Newton* was not the Man

Man he wanted, he was incapable of it, and was only a great Philosopher.

It is more than probable, that if he had applied to the Science of Government the Labours he consecrated to the Knowledge of the Universe, King *William* would not have rejected his Advice.

In how many Circumstances, to how many Questions would not this Philosopher have answered those who might have advised him to consult the Monarch? *William* was only a Politician, a Hero, a great Prince.

The Prince and the Philosopher were equally capable of knowing the Limits of their Genius ; whereas a Man of Imagination would look upon it as an Injustice, to have his Advice refused on any Subject whatsoever. Men of this Character believe themselves capable of every Thing, even the Want of Experience strengthens their Self-Love, which cannot be informed but by their Faults, or diminished but by the Knowledge they acquire.

The greatest Affairs, even those of Government require only sound Wit, for

Wit would be prejudicial, and great Wit is seldom necessary for them. They are not proper for Conduct, and are only fit for Revolutions ; they are formed to build or to destroy. Man's Genius has its Bounds and its Manner of going astray ; Reason well cultivated is sufficient for every Thing that is necessary for us.

If on one Side, there are but few Talents so adapted to one Object, that it would have been impossible for them who are endowed with them to succeed in any other Undertaking ; on the other Hand, we can maintain that every one has Talents, that is to say in general, that when Application and reiterated Exercises are joined to some natural Dispositions, we can succeed in any Employment whatsoever. I only advance a general Proposition, and except every Genius and every Man totally stupid, which are two Sorts of Beings almost equally rare.

We see for Example, some Men who do not appear capable of joining two Ideas together, and who notwithstanding, make the most complicated, the surest and quickest Combinations at Play. Such Operations necessarily require Wit ; it is said their Wit is calculated for Play. But if there

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was no Game invented, can we believe that these subtle Players would have been reduced to a meer material Existence? This Wit so turned for Calculation and Combination, could have been applied to some Sciences which perhaps might have raised their Reputation.

Circumstances often decide concerning the Difference of Talents. Thus the striking of a Flint kindles a Flame by breaking the Equilibrium in which it was confined.

What is much more rare than great Talents, is a Flexibility of Wit that can seize an Object, twine round it and afterwards wind about to another; that can penetrate into the inmost Recesses of it with Strength, and represent it with Clearness. It is a Sight which instead of having a fixed and determined Direction in one Line, has a spherical Action. This is what we may call shining Wit, which can imitate all the Talents, but cannot however carry them to the same Degree, as those who are confined to them; and though sometimes it should be less shining than the Talents, it is much more useful.

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Talents are or become personal to those who are endowed with them, or who have acquired them by Exercise; whereas shining Wit is communicated and unfolds that of other Men. Even this Kind of Wit which seems to belong solely to Nature has as much Need of Exercise in order to perfect itself, as Talents have. Men endowed with this Wit cannot be ignorant of it, how modest soever they may be; Modesty is not, and cannot be any other than an exterior Virtue. But if Presumption seizes them, if they exaggerate their Wit by mistaking the Ease with which they learn for Knowledge itself, or their Foresight and Sagacity for Experience, they fall into greater Blunders than Men of Application, but of narrow Wit. Wit is the first of all Means, it serves for every Thing and supplies almost nothing.

In the Disquisition I have gone through, my Design was not surely to depreciate truly fine Wit. Every Thing indeed can be looked upon as a Talent, or if you will, as a *Trade*. But there are some Things that require an Assemblage of rare Qualities, and fine Wit is of this Number. I would only shew that if it be in the first

Class, it is not the only one that is in it; that if we give it an exclusive Preference, we join Ridiculoufness to Injustice; and that if the Madness of fine Wit encreases or is maintained a long Time, in the Degree it now is in, it will infallibly be prejudicial to Wit.

It is against the Excess and Alteration of Good that we ought to be on our Guard; Evil requires less Attention, because it manifests itself enough. To finish by an Example which has a great Connection with my Subject; it would be resolving a Problem to examine how much the Press has contributed to the Progress of Letters and Sciences, and what Mischief it can also do them. I will not enter into a Discussion that requires a particular Treatise; but desire only to have it observed, that if the Press has furnished a Number of good Works, it has also favoured and multiplied a terrible Number of Treatises on different Subjects; insomuch that a Man who has a Mind to apply himself to a particular Kind of Writing, to examine it to the Bottom and to have a thorough Knowledge of it, is obliged to pay a Tribute of Reading to Study which is useless, disagreeable, and often contrary to

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the Subject. Before he is able to make a Choice of his Authors his Spirits are exhausted.

Thus the greatest Service that literary Societies can render at present to Letters, Sciences and Arts, is to invent Methods and trace out some Ways in order to spare Labour, guard against Errors, and conduct to Truth by the shortest and surest Paths.



C H A P. XII.

On the Relation between Wit and Character.

Character is the distinctive Form of one Soul from another, its different Manner of Being. Character is to Souls what Physiognomy and Variety of the like Features are to Faces.

Faces are composed of the same Parts, in this they resemble each other; but the Coherence and Harmony of these Parts are different, this is what distinguishes one from the other and hinders Confusion.

Men without Character are Faces without Physiognomy, these common Faces which we do not take the Trouble to distinguish.

Wit is one of the Faculties of the Soul which may be compared to Sight; and Sight can be considered by its Clearness, its Extent, or by the Objects it is exercised on: For besides our Faculty of seeing we can still learn to see.

I will not enter here into a metaphysical Examination, which may be judged useless to my Subject; though perhaps no metaphysical Knowledge could be better employed than that which is applicable to Manners; it would verify our Sentiments by demonstrating their Principles.

We saw in the foregoing Chapter the Injustice that is done by the Preeminence given to certain Talents: Now we shall see that the like Methods are taken with Regard to the Judgments that are formed of different Sorts of Wit. There are some of the first Order that are sometimes confounded with Nonsense.

Do not we see some Men whose Openness and Candour hinder us from doing Justice to their Wit? Yet Candour is the simplest and most natural Expression of an Idea which in the Main, may be lively and delicate; and this simple Expression has so much Beauty and by so much the more Merit, as it is the Masterpiece of Art in those to whom it is not natural.

Candour is the interior Sentiment of the Purity of our Soul, which hinders our thinking we have any Thing to dissemble.

Ingenuity can be a Consequence of Folly when it is not an Effect of Unexperience; but Simplicity is no more than the Ignorance of Things which are agreed on, easy to be learned, and good to be despised. Candour is the first Mark of a generous Soul.

Ingenuity and Candour can be met with in the brightest Genius, and then they are the most precious and amiable Ornaments of it.

It is not surprizing, that the Vulgar (who are not worthy of respecting such uncommon Advantages) should be Admirers of Subtlety of Character, which is only the Fruit of the fixed and followed Attention of ordinary Wit inspired by Interest. Subtlety may be a Mark of Wit, but it is never found in a Man of superior Genius, unless he happens to have a low Heart. A superior Genius disdains little Springs, and is employed only on great, that is to say, on simple ones.

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We ought also to distinguish Subtlety of Wit from that of Character. Subtle Wit is often false, only because it is too subtle ; it is too dilated a Body to have any Consistence. Subtlety imagines instead of seeing ; it is deceived by the Dint of supposing. Penetration sees and Sagacity foresees. If Judgment be the Basis of Wit, its Quickness still contributes to its Justness ; but if Imagination be predominant, it is the most fruitful Source of Errors.

In fine, Subtlety is a Lie in Action, and a Lie is always occasioned by Fear or Interest, and consequently by a base Motive. We never see a powerful and absolute Man, whatever Vices he may otherwise have, who tells a Lie to one subordinate to him, because he does not fear him. But if this should happen, it must surely be through Interest, in which Case, he ceases in this Respect to be powerful, and is in a State of Dependency for what he wants and cannot compass by open Force.

We must not be surprized that a Man of Wit is deceived by a Fool. The one follows constantly what he has in View, and the other does not think it necessary to be

on his Guard. The deceiving Men of Wit comes from their not making up their Accounts as they should with Fools, that is to say, from their making too little Account of them.

We have more Reason to be surprized at the Blunders into which Men of Wit fall of themselves. Their Faults are notwithstanding less frequent than those of other Men, sometimes of a more serious Nature, and always more remarkable. However it be, I have enquired into the Reason of it, and I believe I have found it out in the Want of Conformity which sometimes is observed between a Man's Wit and his Character.

The mutual Dependence of Wit and Character can be looked upon in three different Aspects. First, when we have not the Character of our Wit, or the Spirit of our Character; secondly, when we have not Wit enough for our Character; thirdly, when we have not Character enough for our Wit.

A Man for Example, who is capable of great Views, of conceiving, digesting and ordaining great Designs, miscarries, when he

he has a Mind to put them in Execution, because he grows out of Conceit with them, and is disheartened even at the Obstacles which he foresaw, and which he has also found out a Remedy for. Still he is acknowledged to be a Man of a great Deal of Wit, and in Reality it is not in this Point he is wanting. We are surprized at his Conduct, because we do not know that he is fickle and incapable of Constancy in his Character ; that he has only some Fits of Ambition which give Way to his natural Indolence ; that he is incapable of a fixed Will, to which few Things resist, even in narrow-minded Men ; and that in short, he has not the Character of his Wit. Without wanting Wit we are wanting to our Wit through Fickleness, Passion or Timidity.

Another Man whose Character is fit for great Enterprizes, who has Courage and Constancy, wants Wit which furnishes the Means for them. This Man has not the Spirit of his Character.

In this consists the Opposition of Character and Wit. But there is another Manner of committing Faults, in spite of a great Deal of Wit that is even analogous

to Character, which happens, when we have not Wit enough for our Character.

A Man of a quick and extensive Wit conceives still greater Projects; but he must necessarily miscarry in them, because his Wit is not sufficient for his Character. There are some that act foolishly, who, if they had another Character, could have justly passed for Men of superior Genius.

Let us put in Opposition to them a Man whose Wit is confined to a narrow Sphere, but whose Heart being free from strong Passions, is not carried beyond this limited Sphere. His Enterprizes and the Means he employs are in equal Proportion; thus he commits no Faults, and is looked upon as a wise Man, because the Reputation of Wisdom depends less on the remarkable Things which are done, than on the Folly which is avoided.

Perhaps Men of a lively Temper have more Wit than others; but they have also the greatest Need of it. We must see well and be sure footed when we have a Mind to walk fast, otherwise Falls are frequent and dangerous. It is for this Reason, that
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of all Fools the liveliest are the most insupportable.

Too lively a Character is sometimes hurtful to the justest Wit by forcing it imperceptibly beyond its Bounds. We are not humbled at this Excess, because we suppose that a small Degree is contained in a greater; yet in this Case, Great and Small are not well compared, and are of a different Nature. Greater Strength is required to stop at the Goal than to exceed it by the Violence of the Impulsion. To see the Term we tend to is Judgment; to attain to it is Justness; to stop at it is Strength; and to go beyond it is perhaps Weakness.

Judgments that are extremely quick are like those of Self-Love, which sees a great deal, compares but little and judges ill. The Science of Self-Love is of all others the most cultivated, and the least perfected. If Self-Love could admit of Rules in Conduct, it would become the Seed of a great many Virtues, and would supply those even which it seems to exclude.

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It will be objected perhaps that we see some Men of a grave Behaviour and of unexceptionable Wit fall into Errors that are in some Degree extravagant; but we do not consider that these very Men in spite of their cold Exterior are of a violent Character. Their Sedateness is only apparent, and the Effect of some Fault in their Organs; it is a Carriage occasioned by Haughtiness or Education; a false Greatness; and their Reservedness is Nothing else but Pride.

Nothing could be more instrumental to our Happiness than a Sort of Equilibrium between our Ideas and Affections, between our Wit and Character.

In fine, if we reproach Men of Wit with so many Faults, it is because there are but few of them who receive from Nature or from the Extent of their Wit a proportionable Degree of Character, which unhappily does not change.

Manners are corrected, Wit is strengthened or changed, Affections alter their Object, the same Object can successively inspire Love or Hatred; but Character is un-

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unalterable, it can be constrained or disguised, but never destroyed. Humbled and creeping Pride is still Pride.

All that a Man who has the greatest Wit can do is to examine and know himself, and afterwards to ballance Accompts with his Character; otherwise his Faults and Misfortunes serve only to pull him down, without correcting him; however, they furnish a Man of Wit with Matter for Reflexion; this without Doubt is the Reason, why it is said, that Men of Wit never want some Resource. Reflexion serves as a Safeguard to Character, but does not correct it; as Rules serve a Genius, but do not inspire it. They are but of little Use to a Man of a moderate Capacity, but they prevent the Faults of a superior Wit.



CHAP.

C H A P. XIII.

On Esteem and Respect.

WH A T I have hitherto said of the different Judgments of Men, engages me to endeavour to discover the Principles of them.

All the Faculties of our Soul are reduced to Feeling and Knowing; we have only Ideas or Affections, for Hatred itself is only a Revolt against what opposes itself to our Affections.

In Things purely intellectual we should never make false Judgments, if we had all the Ideas present that regard the Subject we have a Mind to judge. Our Mind is never out in its Judgment but when it wants a sufficient Knowledge of the Subject in Hand, whatever Knowledge it may otherwise have in other Respects; but in those where our Interest is concerned, our Ideas are not sufficient to form just Judgments. The Justness of the Mind in this Case, depends on the Uprightness of the Heart.

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If we are affected for or against an Object, it is very hard for us to be in a Condition to judge impartially of it. Our Interest whether it be more or less unfolded, better or worse understood, is always felt and is the Rule of our Judgments. There are some Subjects on which Society has passed its Verdict, and has not left them to our Discussion. We agree to its Decisions through Education or Prejudice; but Society has itself been determined by the Principles which direct our particular Judgments, that is to say, by Interest. We, each of us, consult our personal Interest; Society has consulted the common, which rectifies particular Interest.

It was publick Interest that dictated the Laws and is the Cause of Virtue, as private Interest is of Crimes, when it is opposed to it. Publick Interest determines the general Opinion, and is the Measure of Esteem, of Respect, and of the true Value of Things, that is to say, of the Value agreed on for them. Private Interest decides the most sanguine and intimate Judgments, such are the Judgments of Friendship and Love, the two most sensible Effects of the Love we bear ourselves.

selves. Let us proceed to the Application of these Principles.

What else is Esteem but a Sentiment that inspires what is useful to Society? But though this Usefulness be necessarily relative to all the Members of Society, yet it is too habitual, and not direct enough to be felt in a lively Manner. Thus our Esteem is almost nothing else but a Judgment we form, not an Affection that warms us, such is the Friendship those inspire us with who are personally useful to us; and I understand by personal Usefulness not only Services, material good Offices, but also Pleasure and every Thing that can affect us agreeably, though it may at the End be really prejudicial to us. Usefulness thus understood, ought to be applied even to Love, which is the liveliest of all Sentiments, because its Object is what we look upon as our supreme Good at the Time we are affected with it.

It will be objected to me perhaps that if Love and Esteem have the same Source, and that according to my Principles they differ only in their Degrees, Love and Contempt should never meet together in the same Object, though it may be said, there
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are Examples of it. We do not commonly make the same Objection with Regard to Friendship; we suppose that an honest Man, who has a Friendship for a contemptible Person, is ignorant of, not blind to his Faults; and that when he finds out his Character, which he is supposed unacquainted with, he will do it Justice by breaking off. I will not examine what regards the Appearance of Friendship, which does not always really exist where we imagine we see it. There are a great many Acts of pretended Friendship and Acknowledgment, which are only Proceedings occasioned sometimes by Interest and not Attachments.

Besides, if I answer the Objection made against the liveliest Sentiment, I shall, I believe, be dispensed from clearing up what regards weaker Sentiments.

I say therefore, that Love and Contempt have never had the same Object at the same Time: For I do not understand here by Love, an ardent but indeterminate Desire, which can be fed with every Thing and fixed by Nothing, and whose Violence even forbids it to make a Choice. I speak of that Sort of Love which confines our
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Will to one Object and excludes all others; A Lover of this Kind I say, can never despise the Object of his Attachment, especially if he believes he is loved by it: For injured Self-Love can counter-balance and destroy even Love. We see indeed some Men who feel the strongest Passion for an Object that is generally despised; but far from partaking of this Contempt, they are ignorant of it; if before their Passion they have been of the same Opinion with others, they forget it afterwards, retract it in good Earnest and cry out against Injustice. If they happen in these Transports so common to Lovers to make themselves bitter Reproaches, they are only Fits of inconsiderate Passion, which happen to Lovers who have the greatest Reason to respect each other.

Blindness may not be of constant Duration, and can have Intervals wherein a Man blushes for his Attachment; but this Glimmering of Reason is but a Moment's Sleep of Love which soon awakens in order to disavow it. If we allow there are Faults in the Object we love, they are such as constrain and torment our Love but do not humble it. Perhaps we may be brought to own our Weakness and forced to allow

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a Mistake in our Choice, but this we do through an Impossibility of refuting what is objected to us, in order to withdraw ourselves from Persecution and to secure our Ease against fatiguing Remonstrances, which we are no longer obliged to hear when we agree to every Thing. A Lover is far from feeling or believing what he is forced in this Case to own, especially if he be of a mild Character. But if he be firm in his Resolutions he resists with Courage. What are represented to him as shameful Blemishes in the Object of his Passion, will appear to him to be only Misfortunes which make it dearer to him; Then Compassion comes in to double, ennoble and make a Virtue of his Love, and sometimes with Reason, though it is not possible to make some Censors adopt it who are incapable of Sentiment, and of making the nice and proper Distinctions that separate Vice from Misfortune. Let those who never loved know, whatever Superiority of Wit they may have, that there are an infinite Number of Ideas, even of just Ideas, to which they cannot attain, and which are only reserved to Sentiment.

I just said that Moments of Vexation cannot be looked upon as a fixed State of
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the Soul, nor prove that Contempt is united to Love. Now I must prevent the Objection which may be drawn from some Men who constantly feel the Shame of their Attachment, and are mortified at the vain Efforts they make in order to disengage themselves from it. There are surely such Men, and a greater Number of them than we imagine; but they are no longer in Love, whatever Appearance of it they may have.

There is nothing so much confounded with Love and often more opposed to it than the Force of Habit. It is a Chain which it is harder to be freed from than from Love, especially at a certain Time of Life; for I doubt, whether we can find in Youth the Examples we would fain alledge, not only because young Men have not had Time to contract this Habit, but also because they are incapable of it.

A young Man who loves an Object the most authentically contemptible, is far from suspecting it to be so. He has perhaps as yet no fixed Idea of the Terms of Esteem and Contempt, but is hurried away by his Passion. This is what he feels; I shall not say what he knows: For at this Time,
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he thinks and knows nothing, he enjoys. If this Object ceases to please him because he finds another more agreeable, he is ready to think and repeat what you please of the former.

But in riper Years it is not so, an Habit is contracted; we cease to love and remain attached. We despise the Object of it, because we see it such as it really is, and we see it so, only because we are no longer in Love.

Whereas our Interest is the Rule of our Esteem, when it carries us to Affection, it is very hard for us to join Contempt to it. Love does not depend on Esteem; but Esteem in a great many Occasions, depends on Love.

I own that contemptible Persons whom we own to be such are useful to us; but we look upon them as vile Instruments that are dear to us, but do not love them. Men of Honour are scrupulously exact in making a Return for their Services; because to owe them Gratitude would be too mortifying a Load.

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It is with Reluctance I dare say, that Men naturally sensible are not commonly the best Judges of what is esteemable, that is to say, of what is so for Society. Parents whose Tenderness for their Children is carried to Weakness are the least fit to make good Patriots of them. Yet we are inclined to love by Preference such Persons as are known to be sensible, because we flatter ourselves with the Thoughts of becoming the Object of their Affection, and prefer ourselves to Society. There is a Sort of undetermined Sensibility which is only a Weakness of Organs more worthy of Compassion than Acknowledgment. True Sensibility is that which rises from our Judgments but does not form them.

I have observed, that those who love the publick Good, who espouse the common Cause and make it their Study without Ambition, have a great deal of Acquaintance but few Friends. A publick spirited Man in an active Sense is not commonly fit for Friendship or for Love. It is not only because his Mind is taken up otherwise, it is because we have only a determined Portion of Sensibility which cannot be shared without being diminished. The
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Fire of our Soul in this Respect is very different from a material Flame, which augments and is propagated by the Quantity of Nourishment it receives.

We see amongst People where Patriotism has been held in the greatest Honour, that Fathers sacrificed their Sons to the State ; we admire their Courage or are shocked at their Barbarity, because we judge according to our own Manners. Had we been educated in the same Principles we should think that they scarce made a Sacrifice, whereas all their Affections were centered in their Country, and that there is no Object but what Prejudice of Education can turn our Affections to. Amongst these Republicans Friendship was only an Emulation of Virtue, Marriage a Law of Society, Love a transient Pleasure, and only their Country a Passion. Friendship amongst them was confounded with Esteem ; with us the one is, as I said, a simple Judgment of the Mind, and the other a Sentiment.

We are not afraid to say that we esteem a Man whom we do not love ; in this we do at the same Time, an Act of Justice, of personal Interest and of Candour : It signifies the same Thing as if we had said,

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that

that this very Man is indeed publick-spirited, but we have Reason not to be satisfied with him, and that we prefer ourselves to Society. This Concession which formerly would have been shameful, proves now a days a Sort of philosophical Courage.

The Alteration that has happened in Manners is the Reason why that Sort of Respect which was the Perfection of Esteem amongst the People I mentioned, is excluded from us and can be joined with Contempt.

Respect is nothing else but our acknowledging the Superiority of another. If Superiority of Rank always followed that of Merit, or if exterior Marks of Respect were not prescribed, its Object would be personal as that of Esteem, and it must have been so originally, of what Nature soever the Merit was that was in Fashion; but as some Men had no other Merit but that of maintaining themselves in the Places which their Ancestors have honoured, it was no longer possible since that Time, to confound the Person with the Respect his Places required. This Distinction is at present so commonly established,

blished, that we see some Men who claim for their Rank what they dare not pretend to themselves. You owe, they say, humble Respect to my Place and to my Rank; but they do themselves the Justice not to dare to say, to myself. If Modesty makes Use of the like Expressions, it has not invented them, nor could it ever have adopted a Manner of speaking that makes us contemptible.

The same Reflection has evinced that the same Degree of Respect which might have been refused to a Man, in spite of the Elevation of his Rank, ought to be granted to Superiority of Merit, notwithstanding the Meanness of the State in which it is found. For Respect by changing Objects in its Application, has not changed its Nature, and is due only to Superiority. Thus, this great while past there have been two Sorts of Respect, that which we owe to Merit, and that which is paid to Places or Birth. This last Sort of Respect is no more than a Form of Words and Gestures to which reasonable Men submit, nor can we endeavour to free ourselves from it, but through Folly and a childish Pride.

Virtue being the Object of true Respect, it is plain, it is not a Tribute we owe to Wit or Talents which we praise and esteem, that is to say, we set a high Value on them, nay, we admire them, but we owe them no Respect, whereas they cannot always screen us from Contempt. We do not despise precisely what we admire, but we may despise in some Regards, those whom we admire in others. This Discernment however is rare, the great Number of Things which take up the Imaginations of Men do not permit them to do so exact a Piece of Justice.

Contempt in general is inseparable from low Vices, and Hatred from bold and daring Crimes which unhappily are above Contempt, and make us sometimes confound Horror with a Sort of Admiration. I say nothing in particular of Anger which regards chiefly what becomes personal to us. Anger is an open and transient Hatred, Hatred is Anger kept within our Breasts but followed. In considering all the different Gradations, it appears to me, that every Thing conspires to establish the Principles I have proposed, and to resume them in a few Words,

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We esteem what is useful to Society ; we despise what is prejudicial to it ; we love what is personally advantageous to us, and hate what is contrary to our Desires ; we respect what is superior to us, and admire what is extraordinary.

Nothing more remains to be done but to clear up an Equivocation which is very common on the Word Contempt, and is often made Use of in a very different Acceptation from the Idea or Sentiment of it, which we experience. We often believe, or at least are inclined to make it pass for granted, that certain People are despised, because others make it their Business to undervalue them. I have observed on the contrary, that when we depreciate with Affectation, we are vexed at not being able to despise, and that we are forced to esteem those against whom we inveigh. Such Contempt as is declared with Haughtiness is neither Indifference nor Disdain ; it is the Language of Jealousy, of Hatred mixed with Esteem and violated with Pride ; for Hatred often is a Proof of more Motives of Esteem than even the sincerest Protestations of it.

C H A P. XIV.

On the real Value of Things.

WE have examined in the foregoing Chapter only the Esteem that is relative to Persons; let us now apply our Principles to the Judgments we form of the real Value of Things; when this is done, we shall find that esteeming signifies no more than valuing.

In what Proportion do we esteem or value Things? In that of their Usefulness joined to their Rarity; and this second Manner of considering them is what distinguishes the Esteem we have for Persons from the Value we set on Things. This Distinction is so sure, that we do not esteem Persons on Account of their Rarity, but by considering them as Things. Such is, for Example, the Esteem we have for Talents, which in this Case, we make an Abstraction of from the Person.

We must also observe with regard to Things, what I have done with regard to Persons, that the Pleasure, whether it be
real,

real, or of Agreement, which these Things can give us by gratifying our Senses or our Self-Love, is referred to their Usefulness; but of what Nature soever this Usefulness may be, it always is combined with Rarity to make up the Value we put upon it. Besides Usefulness is measured by its Extent; so that of two Things which are equally rare and useful, that which is useful to the greatest Number of Men deserves the most Esteem; and these three moveable Rules of the Value we set on Things, which are Usefulness, the Extent of this Usefulness, and Rarity are combined to infinite Degrees and always follow the same Laws.

Let us clear up these Principles by Examples. Things of the first Necessity such as Bread and Water cannot be rare, otherwise they would not be necessary; not being rare, they cannot attract our Esteem; but if unhappily they ceased for a Time, to be common, what a Price would not we put on them? This Principle is the Rule of Trade.

But how do we fix the Value of all material Things? By the same Law. We set a high Value on a Diamond, in what consists its Usefulness? In its Lustre, in the

vain Pleasure of Dress, and above all in the frivolous Vanity that results from the Opinion of Riches and Apparel. But on the other Hand, its Degree of Rarity is of the first Order, and compensates and exceeds the Degrees which other Things might have with regard to Usefulness. Besides in another Light, its Usefulness is very great, whereas it is placed in the Order of Riches that are representative of every Thing that is materially useful.

Let us go next to Talents ; how do we value them ? By the Combination of their Usefulness, whether for Conveniency or Pleasure ; by the Number of those who enjoy them, and by the Rarity of the Men that exercise them.

Arts or Trades of the first Necessity are little esteemed, because every one can exercise them, and they are left to that Part of Society which unhappily is the most despised. We do not bear Labourers the Esteem which Gratitude, Compassion and Humanity should inspire. But if we suppose a Thing impossible, that there was only one Man capable of procuring what the Harvests supply, we would make him a God, nor would our Veneration for him di-

diminish until he communicated his Knowledge to the Publick, and acquired by this Means, a greater Right to our Acknowledgment. We might after his Death, pay to his Memory what we refused to his Person. This is perhaps what procured divine Honours to certain Inventers. There have been a great many Deities in Paganism, who have had no other Beginning.

As to what regards such Arts as are purely agreeable, and whose Usefulness consists in the Pleasures they procure, in what Order of Esteem do we place them? Is it not according to their Degrees of Pleasure and the Number of Men that can enjoy them?

There is no Art in which Men in general have such a Degree of Sensibility as in Musick; and as the Pleasure it does them depends on the Performance, it seems they should prefer those who play Pieces of Musick to those who compose them; but on the other Hand, Composers are more rare, and their Usefulness is more extensive. Their Compositions can be carried about and executed every where; whereas the Talent of Execution however superior it may be, is limited to the Pleasure of a few

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People,

People, at least in Comparison of the Composer.

The Rarity of a Thing without any Sort of Usefulness, can deserve no Esteem. The Man who flung Grains of Millet Seed through the Eye of a Needle, was probably the only one that could do it; but this Dexterity was of no Use; the Curiosity that was excited by it, had even no Pleasure in it. There are some Things which we are glad to see, not for the Pleasure we find in them, but for the Sake of knowing whether they really are.

Why do Works of Wit abstracting from their principal Use, deserve more Esteem, why have they a greater Reputation than the rarest Talents? It is by the Advantage they have of being spread about, and of being equally liked by those who are capable of understanding them. *Corneille* perhaps was not a more rare Man than *Lully*; yet their Names are not in the same Line, because there is a greater Number of Men more capable of enjoying the Works of *Corneille* than those of *Lully*; and because the Pleasure that arises from Works of Wit opens the Mind of the Readers, or by affecting their Hearts, gratifies their Sentiments

timents and Self-Love, and in many Respects, exceeds the Pleasure of the Senses caused by Talents.

Not that we make in our Judgments so exact an Analysis, or so geometrical a Comparison; natural Justice inspires them to us, and an attentive Examination confirms them.

Let us run over the Arts and Sciences with this studied Attention, and we shall find, that the Esteem in which they are, always arises from the same Principles, which are also extended to Politicks and the Science of Government.

Enquiries were often made to know the best Sort of Government; some People have determined themselves for one or the other, by their particular Taste: Others think the Form of Government should depend on the Place, and on the Character of the People. This may be true; but whatever Form is preferred, the first Rule is always taken from the Extent of Usefulness. The best of Governments is not that which makes some Men most happy, but that which makes the greatest Number of Men happy. How many unhappy Men

are made, to furnish Materials for what compleats or ought to compleat the Happiness of some particular People, who do not even know how to enjoy it.

Those who are entrusted with the Fate of Men, should always carry back their Accompts to the common Sum.

Every Thing is and ought to be a Calculation in our Conduct ; if we commit Faults, it is because our Calculation does not take in all that should enter into the Sum total, whether it be for Want of sufficient Knowledge, or through Ignorance or Passion.

Not but that the Passions themselves calculate sometimes very nicely. But they do not compute the Time that should enter into the Calculation, hence arise all our Errors : Thus I explain myself.

Prudence of Conduct depends on Experience, on Foresight, and on the Judgment of present Circumstances : We should therefore attend to the Time past, present, and to come ; the Passions consider only one of these Objects at once, the present or the
Time

Time to come, never the past. Some Examples will make this Truth plain.

Love is taken up with the present Time; it seeks actual Pleasure, forgets past Evils, nor does it foresee the future.

Anger, Hatred, and Vengeance which is the Consequence of them, judge in the same Manner as Love. These Passions always put Things in the best Light they possibly can, for their present Happiness; it is only the Time to come that causes their Misfortune; Ambition on the contrary, considers only the Time to come; what was the Term of its Hopes, when it arrives at it, is no more than the Means it makes use of.

Avarice judges as Ambition with this Difference, that one is actuated by Hope, and the other by Fear.

An ambitious Man hopes to arrive at all Things one after another, a covetous Man fears to lose all. They neither of them know how to enjoy.

Avarice like other Passions, is only a redoubling of Love for one's self; but it
always

always acts with Timorousness and Distrust. A covetous Man fearing all Evils ardently desires Riches, which he looks upon as an Exchange for every Thing that is good. He does not however deal as hardly with himself as it is supposed. He calculates very nicely, draws pretty just Conclusions from a false Principle, and finds a great many Enjoyments even in his Privations. There is nothing he does not deprive himself of, in Hopes to enjoy every Thing. At the Time he denies himself a Pleasure, he enjoys in a confused Manner, all the Satisfaction he thinks he can procure himself. True Privations are those which we are obliged to; the Privations of a covetous Man are voluntary. Avarice is the vilest but not the most unhappy of Passions.

We cannot be too careful in correcting and regulating the Passions which make Men unhappy, without disparaging them; and we should make those Passions more and more odious which without making them unhappy, villify them, and are prejudicial to Society, which ought to be the first Object of our Attachment.



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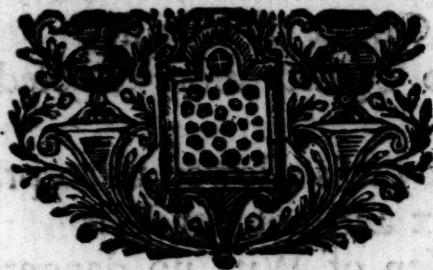
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